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ABSTRACT

This monograph looks at five cases in which corporations have developed programs that permit their employees to take time off for their children's schooling. Three major corporations, one mid-sized business, and a small business are included. All of the case studies involve North Carolina-based institutions in two geographic locations, one urban and one rural. The urban location is Charlotte, and that city's participating businesses are First Union National Bank, Duke Power Company, NationsBank, and Palmer & Cay/Carswell, Inc. The rural location is Catawba County, and organizations described include the Newton-Conover Schools' Project PIECES. Programs of the two communities' Chambers of Commerce are described as well. North Carolina addressed education reform in the early 1980s and has, more recently, dealt with employee time-off for schools policy at the state level. In each case, giving parents time-off to go to their children's school is one part of a corporate program to help public schools. Extensive appendixes contain agreements, press releases, mission statements, newspaper articles, policy statements, memos, North Carolina state legislation regarding employee time off, and parental agreements. Contains 18 endnotes. (JB)

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Employee Time-Off For Public Schools

Stories of Five Corporate Trailblazers and Two Chambers of Commerce

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By Helen Soussou
Cambridge Partnership for Public Education, Inc.
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Published by the Plan for Social Excellence, Inc.

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Cambridge, Massachusetts

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Plan for Social Excellence, Inc.

The Plan for Social Excellence, Inc. — a private foundation — came into being on March 16, 1990, through the change of name of The Lebensburger Foundation, which had been in existence since October 18, 1961. With the change of name came a change of missions, officers, and staff.

The Plan for Social Excellence has elected as its mission the bringing about of positive and measurable improvements in the areas of education and the environment. It supports projects that explore research results; evaluates and disseminates the results of such projects, and encourages the replication of successful projects.

The objectives of the Plan are put into effect primarily through five activities; seminars, grants, scholarships, technical assistance, and publishing. During its initial phase of activities, the plan will concentrate on educational matters. At the appropriate time in the future, it will initiate a similar set of activities in areas related to the environment.

The officers of the Plan have elected not to limit its activities to specific geographic areas. It will make grants and provide technical assistance wherever in the United States there is an opportunity to be of help. It will also distribute its publications and disseminate information about its efforts throughout the country.

The offices of the Plan for Social Excellence, Inc. are located at 116 Radio Circle, Mount Kisco, New York, 10549. The telephone number is 914-241-8690 and the telecopier number is 914-241-7476.

About the Author

Helen Soussou is interested in the interface between business and education. She has worked on projects with the Cambridge Partnership for Public Education and with the Watertown (Mass.) Chamber of Commerce's Youth and Business Committee. She serves on the board of the Powers Music School, a community-based non-profit school in Belmont, Massachusetts.

Ms. Soussou's first link to North Carolina came as an undergraduate at Duke University where she earned her B.A. in history. She has an M.S.W. from Smith College and she has practiced casework at the Childrens Hospital in Boston and in a Massachusetts public school system. In 1984, Ms. Soussou earned an M.B.A. from Boston College. From 1984 to 1986, at the Harvard Business School, she wrote teaching cases and industry studies in the area of Entrepreneurial Finance and Transportation. She resides in Watertown, Massachusetts.

Cambridge Partnership for Public Education, Inc.

The Cambridge Partnership for Public Education, Inc., founded in 1986, is a non-profit organization consisting of more than 50 members from business, industry, institutions of higher education, the Cambridge Public Schools and individuals in the Cambridge community who collaborate to improve the quality of education in the public schools of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The mandate of the Partnership is to develop collaborative projects that improve the quality of public education in Cambridge and provide a mechanism through which community resources are allocated for programs in an equitable and timely manner.

Designed to address the social, cultural and economic diversity reflected in the Cambridge Public School system, the Partnership offers programs ranging from small projects targeting a few students to city-wide efforts addressing issues that affect the entire school system.

"To strengthen the link between home and school **we propose that parents spend at least one day each term with their child at school.** To achieve this goal, employers need to get involved. Specifically, we recommend that parents be given **release time from work** to participate in teacher conferences. If society sees value in release from work to serve on juries and to vote, then surely allowing parents time periodically to visit their children's schools is in the public interest."

— *An Imperiled Generation: Saving Urban Schools,*
Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching, 1988, p.43

"Business can provide the leadership to bring the community together in support of school reform. But business also **needs to institutionalize the commitment to education**, both **in company policy and organization**. No commitment to work toward the reform of education will succeed unless there is a long-term dedication of leadership, talent and resources...

"If a company is serious about its commitment (to education), it needs to enunciate this as **company policy**, as an ongoing **mission** of the company. This can be expressed as part of the company statement of policy or goals, or as an annual directive to managers and employees. This will insure that the company commitment is maintained in a consistent way in every community in which the company has a presence."

"The company policy should include a provision urging and encouraging employees who have children in the schools to become active with the school and providing time and opportunity for them to do so."

— Leonard Lund of the Conference Board,
"The Schools — A Progress Report: Business and Education"
in *Impact* from the Public Affairs Council, Sept. 1989

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Many people had a part in the development of this monograph. Their participation is much appreciated.

Elizabeth Shostak and Mary Pat Prado, in their role as active and concerned parents in Cambridge, originally brought to the Cambridge Partnership for Public Education the idea of time off for parent employees to attend parent-teacher conferences and events at their children's school.

Palmer Swanson, director of public affairs at the Polaroid Corporation, and Elaine Tracey, senior vice president at BayBank, 1991-92 co-chairs of the Cambridge Partnership for Public Education, gave the go-ahead to explore the issue further.

Alan Dyson, former executive director of the Cambridge Partnership for Public Education and, since July 1992, the T.I.D.E. senior education specialist at MIT's Council for Primary and Secondary Education, was instrumental in seeking support for the writing of this monograph and gave encouragement along the way.

The Plan for Social Excellence and the Polaroid Foundation have offered both financial support and guidance for this work. I very much appreciate their giving me the opportunity to explore and develop this subject, an area that I believe is timely and pertinent to a number of current issues and needs.

At the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, President Carroll Gray, assistant Trish King, and most especially, Deborah Pinchak, vice president of the Education Division, welcomed me and arranged for me to meet key players in this story. I appreciate their warm welcome and their invaluable help.

I would like to thank the people in North Carolina who shared information about their programs. I believe that the story of their work will be helpful to managers in other companies who are considering the idea of time off for employees for parent-teacher conferences and/or volunteer activities in public schools.

In Charlotte, they include Judy Allison, vice president of Charlotte community relations, First Union National Bank of North Carolina; Tom Mabry, coordinator of educational services at Duke Power Company; Patricia Goolsby, vice president of the Personnel Division, and Joseph Martin, executive vice president of NationsBank; David Rizzo, president of Heron, Inc.; Cecil Cooke, president of Palmer & Cay/Carswell, Inc.; Phillip Jurney, Business Services, BB&T., and Corinne Allen of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation.

In Catawba County, I would like to thank Susan McGee, guidance counselor at Newton-Conover Middle School and Larry Harris, the principal there; Albert Gaither, president of Ridgeview, Inc. and Edith Grimes, personnel director at Ridgeview; and, finally, Nancy Burleson, vice president of quality of life, government & leadership, Catawba County Chamber of Commerce.

Foreward

"When we planned events for parents, few people came," lamented Elizabeth Shostak and Mary Pat Prado, two active parents at the Tobin School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Knowing that many mothers as well as fathers of children in their school worked outside the home, these two mothers and their fellow committee members suspected that jobs kept parents from school events. Aware that parent involvement enhanced childrens' achievement, these parents from the Tobin School's Follow-Through/Magnet Parent Support and Education Committee drafted a proposal for their local school-business partnership, the Cambridge Partnership for Public Education (CPPE). This monograph grew from that step.

Their proposal, addressed to Cambridge employers, outlined an "educational release" policy in which companies would grant paid time off for employees to go to their child's school for parent-teacher conferences, classroom visits or other school-related events. The suggested policy included up to five personal leave days a year to oversee a child's education, corporate articulation of value of using time off to attend school events, documentation by parents of the fact that they have a child in school, and pre-planning with the employee's manager or supervisor. "We think implementation of all of these measures would be great, but we would also be happy to have this document used as a basis for discussion leading to policy development by the employers," Shostak said.

Located across the Charles River from Boston and a part of the Boston metropolitan community (population approximately three million), Cambridge is a heterogeneous city of 98,000 people, about 7,750 of which attend public schools. Cambridge's one high school has 2,200 students from 64 nationalities. The CPPE, Cambridge's business-higher education-school partnership, has 55 members including Harvard, MIT, Lesley College and Bentley College. Among the major corporate members are Polaroid, Lotus and Stride Rite. Small to mid-sized companies, city government and the city's school system are also members. The Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, from which the CPPE grew, has a membership of over 800 businesses. Needless to say, only a small portion of the workers in Cambridge's public and private institutions have children in the Cambridge public schools; these workers come from many surrounding suburbs and towns as well as Cambridge.

The CPPE's leaders liked the concepts in the parents' proposal, but viewed it as a long way from present practice. They decided to find out whether similar programs existed elsewhere and, if so, how they worked. They asked for some background research. This monograph follows from that survey research with the hope that its stories will be helpful not only to Cambridge, but also to other communities and corporations considering policy development.

Employee time-off-for-schools is a relatively young idea that is burgeoning here and there around the nation, aided by major companies with divisions in different cities, by the American Electronics Association which has members in many cities, and by initial actions in several states.

Although employee release for schools has not yet become part of the vocabulary in most discussions about Work/Family policy, that could change because the concept fits nicely with a focus of analysts in the field. For example, Fran and Charles Rodgers wrote in 1989 about the need for businesses to accommodate workers' family roles; they urged companies to move away from equating productivity with time at the desk.[1] Dana Friedman of the Family and Work Institute has written about a three-stage evolvement of Work/Family policy in corporations with the third stage being an emphasis on productivity rather than time at task.[2] Felice Schwartz, in her 1992 book, *Breaking with Tradition,* focuses on the need to recognize the existence of family in the lives of the majority of today's workers, male and female, and to find ways to aggressively support workers in both their family lives and their work lives. She emphasizes the benefits to the corporation as well as to the worker when the situation is addressed in a positive, aggressive, and supportive problem-solving way.[3]

1. Fran Sussner Rodgers and Charles Rodgers, "Business and the Facts of Family Life," *Harvard Business Review* 67, no. 6 (November-December 1989): 128.
2. Described by Sylvia Ann Hewlitt, in *When the Bough Breaks,* (Basic Books, 1991), pp. 211. Her source is the Letters to the Editor, *Harvard Business Review* 68, no. 1 (January-February 1990): 195-196.
3. Felice N. Schwartz, *Breaking with Tradition,* (New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1992).

Why Give Parents Time-Off To Go To Their Kids' Schools?

To help the children achieve more...

Countless studies exist that show a positive correlation between children's achievement and their parents involvement in their schooling. One example is a study led by Professor Sandy Dornbusch of Stanford University.[1] Professor Dornbusch, after having surveyed 8,000 *high school* students and 3,500 of their parents, reports that..."The degree of parental participation in such school functions as Open School Nights, regardless of parents' own educational attainment is strongly linked to grades." (Note that these are high school students, an age group in which parental involvement in schooling is particularly low.)

Back in 1981, Anne Henderson published an extensive literature search on parent involvement: *Parent Participation and Student Achievement: The Evidence Grows.* In 1987, she updated that work with *The Evidence Continues to Grow: Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement.* In 1987, she said "...the evidence is now beyond dispute: parent involvement improves student achievement....what works is for parents to be involved in a variety of roles over a period of time. The form of parent involvement does not seem to be as important as that it is reasonably well-planned, comprehensive and long-lasting."[2]

"...the evidence is now beyond dispute: parent involvement improves student achievement.... what works is for parents to be involved in a variety of roles over a period of time."

The same conclusion is reaffirmed in a more recent work, *Parent Involvement and Success for all Children: What We Know Now,* written by Susan Swap, a professor at Wheelock College in Boston.[3] As stated in the preface. ..."Swap highlights the strong connection between parental involvement and student achievement and summarizes methods of facilitating the transmission of values and skills between the home and school environments." She also offers an extensive bibliography.

"Researchers found that students whose parents talked with them about schoolwork usually got noticeably higher grades."

Early in 1992, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on a survey of 25,000 *eighth graders* and noted that "Parents' involvement in their children's schooling falls far short of what's needed, the government asserts....The school itself was unknown territory to most of the parents. Only half had attended a school meeting during the academic year, fewer than a third had visited their children's classes, and two-thirds said they had never talked to school officials about their kids' programs and work.....researchers found that students whose parents talked with them about schoolwork usually got noticeably higher grades. TV restrictions at home also tended to boost grades."[4]

To help workers be more productive...

In a survey of working parents, 52 percent of absenteeism was for family-related reasons

- 70 percent of mothers of school-aged children are now in the work force, compared to 30 percent in 1960.[5]
- 25 percent of homes are now headed by single parents, twice as many as in 1970.[6]
- Some 15.8 million children live in single-parent families, including more than 60 percent of all black children under the age of 18. Both the absolute figures and the proportion of children in one-parent families have doubled in the past two decades.[7]
- In a survey of working parents, 52 percent of absenteeism was for family-related reasons.[8]
- 25 percent of men and 48 percent of women spend unproductive time at work because of child care issues.[9]
- In an AT&T study, nearly three-fourths of fathers said they had to deal with family issues while at work.[10]
- A 1989 national study found that male managers under 40 are the work force group least satisfied with the amount of time their jobs leave for family life.[11]

- In a 1988 survey by Dupont, 33 percent of the company's male employees said they would like to work part-time and be with their families more.[12]

- Los Angeles Department of Water and Power sponsors seminars and support groups for fathers, including a 6 a.m. group of ditch diggers and repair men at a heavy equipment garage.[13]

- Hewlett-Packard has had larger-than-expected attendance at its "Fatherhood in the 90s" seminar. Aetna Life & Casualty also sponsors a fathers' group.[14]

The times have changed. Now often there is only one parent in the home, one parent who must singlehandedly earn the family's living and attend to all the responsibilities of raising children. When there are two parents in the home, they both work and they struggle to parent as well. When mother brings home a paycheck, it is evident that father needs to be an active parent too — just for the family to survive. At the same time, fathers are increasingly wanting to learn how to take an active role with their children and they are seeking a work place that acknowledges their need to be active parents or, more optimally, supports the need. A parent who is supported in his parenting role by his employer will be a parent whose energy is more freed for the job-related work.

A parent who is supported in his parenting role by his employer will be a parent whose energy is more freed for the job-related work.

The nation is focused on improving public education. The corporate world is often in the forefront of efforts to improve public schools. Recognition of the key role of parents in children's education is widespread. It only makes sense to put two and two together and to realize that when a company helps its employees get to parent-teacher conferences, it is helping to improve public education and, at the same time, relieving employee stress over conflicting roles.

To help companies compete for workers and to build employee loyalty...

"Today you must accept parenthood as a cost of doing business....As things stand now, the business world must enlarge its infrastructure to support the family needs of employees."

- "Recruiters are getting demands from job candidates that were unheard of a decade ago. Some want promises of flexible scheduling. ...Work and Family policies are now being viewed as a competitive tool....That wasn't the case five years ago....The trend is expected to accelerate as the recession wanes and the labor market tightens over the coming decade....Industries with a shortage of skilled workers are most affected."[15]

- Many young workers are repelled by the sacrifices they have seen older colleagues make. Others feel they suffered because of their parents' careers.[16]

- "Since the early 1980s the number of companies offering family support benefits has increased by a factor of nine, and this rate of growth will only speed up in the 1990s as competition for the best employees forces the issue ....In a recent survey by *Working Mother* magazine, 77 percent of readers said flexible hours would make an enormous difference to their lives, yet implementing a flextime policy would not cost employers a penny....It is possible to look forward to a decade where corporate America will get into the business of helping a significant proportion of all dual-worker families. The driving force will be enlightened self-interest not altruism."[17]

- "Now that women are in the work force, children have to have a business impact. Today you must accept parenthood as a cost of doing business....As things stand now, the business world must enlarge its infrastructure to support the family needs of employees. It has to be part of the business of business.."[18]

Human capital is the asset of the 1990s. Demographics tell us that the total workforce will be smaller and more diverse. Workers with skills will be in demand and the workplace will be asking how to attract talented, skilled individuals. Those companies that are family-friendly will have an edge.

Companies focused on maximizing human capital will also see the connection between their immediate search for skilled workers and the need to support parent employees in relation to the education of their children, the nation's future work force.

Overview Of Findings

When asked about policy regarding employee time-off to go to parent-teacher conferences, a number of companies and professional analysts nationwide said they were not used to thinking in those terms. However, a range of programs did turn up, some with paid and some with unpaid time-off. Moreover, occasionally someone would imply knowledge of other programs, giving the idea that this particular universe is expanding day by day. Often this type of corporate policy is a part of a larger corporate response to education reform or to the stimulus of a larger group. Some examples follow.

The **Chambers of Commerce of Houston, Texas and Charlotte, North Carolina** have created programs in their cities in which scores of businesses have agreed to give their employees time off for parent-teacher conferences. Some of those companies are local divisions of major national corporations.

Houston's program goes back to 1978, when under the leadership of Dr. Billy Reagan, then superintendent of schools, the businesses and the school system worked together on a major campaign. It was replete with advertising, information packets for parents on resources, and special days when, all over the city, parents went to parent-teacher conferences. Employees took time off from work and the children's achievement went up significantly the first year after the program began. That year all of Houston's elementary children scored at or above grade level on the Iowa Basic Skills Test for the first time.

Employees took time off from work and the children's achievement went up significantly the first year after the program began. That year all of Houston's elementary children scored at or above grade level on the Iowa Basic Skills Test for the first time.

Now, in the 90s, the program is reduced in scope, but the Chamber of Commerce has created the "Houston Business Promise," an agreement which over 390 businesses had signed by April 1991. (See Appendix I, pp. 50-53 for a copy of the Houston Business Promise.) In its first plank, this document asks the business to pledge to, "Encourage employees with children to support and be involved in the learning process of their children, including attendance at parent/teacher conferences." It elaborates by saying companies should, "help employees attend parent/teacher conferences by allowing time off with pay, or compensatory time, or by adjusting work schedules."

The Charlotte Chamber of Commerce developed a generic education mission statement and introduced it to members early in 1990, recommending that each company tailor the generic statement to fit its own needs. The first point in the mission statement said that employees, "will be allowed reasonable work time to meet with their children's teachers, to confer and support their children's education." Four of the stories in this monograph focus on Charlotte corporations and tell how they developed their time-off for schools policy.

A small school system in **Newton-Conover, North Carolina** sends guidance counselors to local manufacturers to talk to factory workers about their child's school progress. The story of that program is also highlighted in these pages as is the work of their local Chamber of Commerce.

A small school system in Newton-Conover, North Carolina sends guidance counselors to local manufacturers to talk to factory workers about their child's school progress.

IBM has a Meal Break Flexibility policy in which employees can take up to two hours for lunch in order to pursue personal choice activities. IBM highlights "attending a child's school function" as an example of an appropriate use of that policy. IBM's flexible work policy also permits workers to start work up two hours earlier or later than normal with stay times adjusted. Many other corporations are developing flexible work policies to help employees meet personal or family needs, but have not highlighted parent-teacher conferences specifically.

According to the **American Electronics Association** (AEA), employees are likely to feel more supported if a company articulates or spells out its approval of employees using personal time for parent-teacher conferences even if it doesn't award paid time-off for schools. The AEA has developed a communications kit, "Get Together for Kids," for companies to use in communicating to their employees their support for time-off for parent-teacher conferences. As of March 1992, 413 companies across the nation, many of them AEA members, had signed on to that group's "Get Together for Kids" program. (See Appendix II, p. 54 for more information about AEA's program.)

Businesses are finding that support for parents taking an active role in their children's education dovetails with the increasing need to relieve stresses on working parents and, therefore, increases employee loyalty and productivity.

In developing its program, the AEA held focus groups with parent employees and with teachers. Parent employees said that often they could leave work for school conferences, especially if they had a white collar job or if their absence didn't bring the workplace to a halt. However, the problem was often the workplace culture surrounding the request. Workers felt guilty for asking. A fast-paced environment didn't encourage leaving for any personal reasons, but at least some reasons like doctor's appointments might be highlighted in personal leave policy. The AEA also picked up a widespread perception that if a parent was still going to parent-teacher conferences after the third grade, it meant that the child had a learning disability, so again there was a subtle pressure in the culture to not leave work to go to your child's school. All this in spite of research that shows parents coming to their children's school helps students' achievement even through high school.

Education release programs, though not yet prevalent, are popping up across the country as corporations look internally for additional ways to help education. Businesses are finding that support for parents taking an active role in their children's education dovetails with the increasing need to relieve stresses on working parents and, therefore, increases employee loyalty and productivity. Often the programs are started by companies that have already been involved in helping public schools in other ways. They find that employee release for parent-teacher conferences is one more way to express their commitment to improving primary and secondary education.

Introduction To Case Studies: Corporate And Chambers Of Commerce

This monograph looks at five cases in which corporations have developed programs that permit their employees to take time off for their children's schooling. Three major corporations, one mid-sized business and a small business are included. All of the case studies involve North Carolina-based institutions in two geographic locations, one urban and one rural. The state of North Carolina dug into education reform in the early 1980s and has, more recently, dealt with employee time-off for schools policy at the state level. Important and pertinent programs of the two Chambers of Commerce in these locations are described as well. These stories tell about an exciting mix of individual, institutional, community and state involvement in program development, all with the goal of raising the educational achievement of children within their jurisdiction.

The leaders' primary motivation to action is economic. Economics drives the desire — with strategic planning that looks to the firm's and the community's long-term future as well as to the present.

In these cases, giving parents time-off to go to their children's school is only one part of an extensive corporate program to help public schools. One cannot get the full picture of the environment in which a time-off for parents policy developed without an appreciation of the source of the corporation's motivation and the extent of its effort for the public schools. Therefore, the material describes a range of corporate education programs within each firm. However, to aid the more focused reader, the material about parent release for schools policy is highlighted in boldface type.

As the speakers in these stories illustrate, the leaders' primary motivation to action is economic. Economics drives the desire — with strategic planning that looks to the firm's and the community's long-term future as well as to the present. Economics is behind the commitment, the focus and the staying power.

The business people in these two North Carolina communities are strategic planners and they are growth-oriented. They want to increase business in their areas and they see a clear-cut relationship between a healthy business climate, a well-educated work force and a thriving community. For example, Joe Martin of NationsBank speaks about the central importance to a bank's business of a healthy, vital economy. Otherwise, who would take out loans and who would deposit earnings, the bread and butter of banks? Similarly, Tom Mabry of Duke Power highlights the intimate connection between his company's sales and the strength of the economy in the communities it serves. Prosperity leads to more homes and more factories producing more and needing more electricity. These people are able to visualize the direct benefits to their business of a well-educated, achieving community.

Joe Martin of NationsBank speaks about the central importance to a bank's business of a healthy, vital economy. Otherwise, who would take out loans and who would deposit earnings, the bread and butter of banks?

Each community's Chamber of Commerce also has a clear vision of the relationship between prosperity and educated workers. Charlotte's Chamber developed its interest in education after the region's business declined and members reported that job applicants were arriving with inadequate skills. Catawba County's Chamber wants to attract more high technology business to the area and keep those which it has. It faces a labor shortage and seeks a highly skilled work force.

Interviewees were also conscious of the positive effects of these programs on employee morale. NationsBank hopes to relieve stress on employees by offering time off for parent-teacher conferences and school volunteering opportunities. Cecile Cooke, CEO of Cay/Carswell, Inc., believes that his firm's public school programs result in his employees feeling better about themselves and their work while maintaining their work performance. Albert Gaither, Ridgeview, Inc.'s president, observed that "happier parents make better employees." A First Union National Bank employee said that her company's program made her feel that the bank valued her as a person.

Along with the economics and the morale-building comes a desire to help in a situation where the need is evident and real. People in North Carolina don't like the fact that

North Carolina's standing on the SAT was 48th in 1983 and 49th in 1991. North Carolinians want to increase that standing while simultaneously increasing the percentages of students taking the SAT. Everyone involved knows that improving achievement in education is a long-term effort with high goals and many obstacles. Though education is in crisis there is always a tendency for inertia. Increased education achievement means change in the larger culture and cultural change doesn't come easy. But these communities are tackling the intractable issues, working together, integrating the effort into workplaces and schools, into homes and jobs.

I. Charlotte, North Carolina

Setting the stage...

Deborah Pinchak, vice-president for education at the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce said, with enthusiasm, "Our goal is to make the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System the best integrated system in the Southeast and one of the very best in the nation by the year 2000." Pinchak was quoting the mission statement adopted by the city's school system and by the Chamber of Commerce. She and everyone else involved seem to be taking the goal quite seriously. A lot is going on in public education in Charlotte.

Charlotte sits in Mecklenburg County; the combined city and county population is about 425,000 while the metropolitan area is over a million. Charlotte's airport, a transportation hub, has fueled the city's expansion. Charlotte is a major service and distribution point for the Southeast as well as a financial center.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System, the 29th largest in the U.S., has 77,000 students and is growing. The

school system is fully integrated countywide; 57 percent of the students are white while 39.3 percent are black. In 1991, 79 percent of the graduates continued their education and the dropout rate was 6.6 percent.

I-A. The Chamber Of Commerce— A Hub For Charlotte

David Rizzo, the Chamber's 1992 Education Council chairman, says that in Charlotte, the Chamber is THE networking organization for local business.

Carroll Gray, Chamber of Commerce president, identifies several historical influences on the city. Back in 1971-72, Charlotte was a U.S. Supreme Court test case for school desegregation. Surveillance under the court order was open-ended, timewise. Charlotte faced forward, tackled the issue and became proud of its relatively good race relations. Then, in the mid-80s, business leaders saw their competitive position slipping; volume and profits declined in a traditionally strong manufacturing region. Businesses had to retrain job applicants who arrived at their doorsteps with inadequate numerical, reading and writing skills.

Business leaders saw their competitive position slipping; volume and profits declined in a traditionally strong manufacturing region. Businesses had to retrain job applicants who arrived at their doorsteps with inadequate numerical, reading and writing skills.

Charlotte competed for Okuma, the world's foremost machine toolmaker, when it sought a U.S. site for its first non-Japanese plant — and Charlotte won. When Okuma trained its Charlotte workers, they produced well, so the businessmen concluded that the workers had the necessary potential.

In 1988, after members expressed concerns in a survey, the Chamber formed the Task Force on Education and Employment with membership from business (including the recently arrived Okuma Machine Tools), government, education, and minority groups. Experts, including Leonard Lund from the Conference Board, made presentations. On the Task Force's recommendation, the Chamber formed an Education Division and hired a full-time staff person for education. By 1992, the

Education Division had eight committees, each chaired by a volunteer businessperson who, as committee chair, sits on the Chamber's Education Council.

The mission statement spoke about partnerships in which employees would go to schools to volunteer.

In 1989, the Chamber as a whole focused on education. The new Education Council identified parental involvement as a major factor in children's achievement. It commissioned a survey and found local parents ready to increase their involvement in the schools and to pay more taxes for education. These businessmen asked themselves how to get parents involved and realized that they employed the parents of Charlotte's children.

They then developed a **generic education mission statement for corporations** and asked Chamber members to tailor it to their own company. (See Appendix III, pp. 55-56 for copy of the generic mission statement). Those who did so would join the Chamber's Business Honor Roll. **A key component of the generic mission statement was the concept of releasing employees for parent-teacher conferences and other important events at their children's school.** The mission statement suggested a number of far-reaching and salient ideas about corporate support of education plus techniques to make them work. It spoke about partnerships in which employees would go to schools to volunteer.

John Georgius, president of First Union National Bank and chairman of the Chamber spoke of the school system's mission, subsequently adopted by the Chamber: To have the best integrated system in the Southeast and one of the premier school systems of the nation by the year 2000.

In December 1989, John Georgius, president of First Union National Bank and chairman of the Chamber, spoke to its membership. He noted that North Carolina had the nation's lowest SAT scores and that test scores of American students compared poorly with those of other countries. He spoke of the school system's mission, subsequently adopted by the Chamber: To have the best integrated system in the Southeast and one of the premier school systems of the nation by the year 2000. Georgius said, "*Everything* we do in education must now be measured against that goal."

He asked members to encourage employees to get more involved as parents — and to give employees time off from work to visit their children's teachers. He noted new efforts by the school system to find ways to measure progress.

He said "**it will take at least a 10-year commitment of hard work, constant pushing and frequent measurement to see what works and what doesn't. As business leaders we must be on the front lines for the entire campaign.**" And so a long-term effort was launched. It has been snowballing and gaining speed since.

James Babb, the Chamber's 1990 Education Council chairman, began his term by writing his fellow executives on the Chamber's Advisory Board, asking them to work on education mission statements and citing four major companies that were working on theirs. In 1990, the Chamber's newsletter *Ventures* featured a growing list of members, large and small, who had developed education mission statements and, in so doing, had attained the Honor Roll.

"It will take at least a 10-year commitment of hard work, constant pushing and frequent measurement to see what works and what doesn't."

In looking back, David Rizzo, the Chamber's 1992 Education Council chair, identified three major accomplishments of the 1988-1990 period: creating awareness, doing benchmark community research, and developing the mission statements.

Much more happened in 1991-92. The Chamber surveyed parents again in June 1991 just before the arrival of the new school superintendent, John Murphy. It found that parents had less confidence in the school system than in 1989. They were still willing to pay more for education and they were more willing to pay higher teachers' salaries. Meanwhile, in 1991-92, Chamber-supported school-business partnerships increased from 30 to 140. Charlotte's schools, with the Chamber's help, applied for the "America 2000" awards. They won in the spring of 1992 with possible awards of $20 million to the school system over four years.

Also in 1992, volunteer teams of Chamber members performed an operations review of the school system, identifying over $4.5 million in annual savings, $1 million in capital savings and a need for $900,000 in investment in people, systems and equipment. Superintendent Murphy set timelines for his operations managers to show progress in implementation.

Team members remained available to help along the way. Dollars saved were to be reapplied to new programs.

The Partnership Program has become a major arm of the Chamber's education efforts. The public schools have been receptive to business interest.

The Partnership Program has become a major arm of the Chamber's education efforts. The public schools have been receptive to business interest and, with the help of a structure set up by the Education Division of the Chamber of Commerce, they have developed a process for building partnerships.

Movement towards a partnership develops on two fronts under Chamber guidelines. A business surveys employees to learn their interests and sends that information to the Chamber of Commerce. Meanwhile, a school does a "needs analysis" which it then includes with a request to the Chamber for a partner. The Chamber's Partnership Committee makes a match. The Chamber has developed a Partnership Manual. A member of the Chamber's Partnership Committee holds a planning meeting with the business and the school to go over the manual, to develop collective objectives, and to lay out clearly the school's objectives and those of the business. Each of the two participating institutions designates a staff member as a liaison for the Partnership. Then they proceed for the year. The manual contains an end-of-the-year evaluation form and businesses are encouraged to survey their participating workers about what they liked in the program.

Branch Banking and Trust Company opens the school year by inviting the managers of its volunteers to an open house at the bank's school partner, and in so doing, increases workplace acceptance of the program.

Partnerships put on end-of-the-year Appreciation Programs for participating teachers and volunteers. Different businesses have responded creatively to the guidelines. Branch Banking and Trust Company, for example, opens the school year by inviting the managers of its volunteers to an open house at the bank's school partner, and in so doing, increases workplace acceptance of the program.

The Chamber of Commerce has also played an active role in the founding of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation which had its formal start in July of 1991. The Foundation, with Corinne Allen as its new executive director, has moved quickly to sponsor several education programs in the summer of 1992: a program on pertinent management tech-

niques for the Principals' Academy and a Pre-Algebra Program for middle school math teachers and their students.

In four and a half years, from 1988 to mid-1992, the Charlotte business community, with the initiative and leadership of the Chamber of Commerce, has worked in tandem with the public school system to recognize the need for change, mobilize community desire and resources, and implement many programs for change. Momentum has built and program success has led to the creation of more programs, each time increasing the reach in depth or scope.

In four and a half years, the Charlotte business community, with the initiative and leadership of the Chamber of Commerce, has worked in tandem with the public school system to recognize the need for change, mobilize community desire and resources, and implement many programs for change.

The following pages tell how four corporations, all members of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, developed policy for **employee time-off for parent-teacher conferences** and school volunteering. The two major banks are based in Charlotte and started their program in response to the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce initiative as did the insurance service business. Duke Power introduced an employee time-off for schools program in 1984 and refined it recently. All three of the large companies, though headquartered in Charlotte, have a major presence in other areas of the South. Consequently, programs begun in Charlotte have ramifications for communities in a much wider geographical area.

I-B. First Union National Bank

Characteristics of the Bank

First Union National Bank, a bank holding company based in Charlotte, has about 1,000 bank branches in North and South Carolina, Florida, and Georgia plus an office in Tennessee. With $50 billion in assets, First Union is the 11th largest bank in the United States. Of its 22,000 employees, 4,500 work in Charlotte. Each state has its own president. In North Carolina, the state is further divided into four regions.

John Georgius, First Union Corporation's president and vice-chairman, was chairman of the Charlotte Chamber of

Commerce in 1989, the year the Chamber voted to focus on education. It was Georgius who made the stirring speech in December 1989 that called upon business leaders to get involved in education, to write education mission statements, to release employees for parent-teacher conferences and to persist in their efforts throughout the decade.

The Education Task Force invited speakers from education, business, and the Chamber of Commerce. They heard that parental involvement was key to children's school achievement.

1989 — First Union Task Force for Education Created

Before making the speech, Georgius had already initiated efforts to develop a corporate education strategy in his own company. In 1989 he had asked Ann Thomas, vice president of corporate contributions, to set up an internal task force for education. Thomas invited people from pertinent functional areas to join. Staff from Personnel, Internal Corporate Communications, Training and Development, and Community Relations took part as well as those who had led other education projects. Judy Allison, vice-president for Charlotte community relations, noted "it really helped to put some executive level people on the task force because it had to have clout to work."

"It really helped to put some executive level people on the task force because it had to have clout to work."

First Union's Three Point "Excellence in Education" Program

The Education Task Force invited speakers from education, business, and the Chamber of Commerce. They heard that parental involvement was key to children's school achievement. They heard the schools request volunteer help. They developed "Excellence in Education," a three-pronged program that included:

1) parent involvement — with employees encouraged to go to their children's school for parent-teacher conferences and other important school events and to become more involved in their child's education.

2) parent education — with lunchtime parenting seminars on topics requested by employees via a survey. A parent education library was set up in the Training and Development Department.

3) volunteer involvement — with First Union employees volunteering in partnerships and programs within the local schools.

In addition, First Union revised its program for matching employee charitable contributions so that employee gifts of at least $25 to grades K-12 schools would be matched by the corporation.

The bank said that existing time-away-from-work policy should be extended to cover parent-teacher conferences and education volunteer involvement.

Specifics of 1990 Work/Release Policy

Because First Union believes in empowering its managers, the task force **decided to tie the new time-off policy to an existing time-away-from-work policy ("Corporate Incidental Absence Policy") for reasons such as doctor's appointments, children's illness, etc. Thus, the bank said that existing time-away-from-work policy should be extended to cover parent-teacher conferences and education volunteer involvement.** Existing policy required that employees schedule time-away-from-work in a careful way with their managers.

An employee of First Union National Bank tutors a public school student.

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Implementation

Charlotte served as a pilot site for First Union's "Excellence in Education" program. Though work release for parent-teacher conferences was a key ingredient of the new program, it was only one of three elements and, since not all workers were parents, it didn't apply to everyone like the volunteering aspect did. A large percentage of the publicity focused on the volunteering.

In March 1990, Georgius announced the new program at a meeting with 400 Charlotte managers and told them that they should let employees take time off for public school involvement.

In March 1990, Georgius announced the new program at a meeting with 400 Charlotte managers and told them that they should let employees take time off for public school involvement. He urged them to be flexible. Managers and supervisors next met with their employees and explained how time-away-from-work for parental involvement would be handled in their areas.

Georgius sent a letter to all employees via office mail, saying they should feel free to ask for time off work for school involvement. Corporate Communications wrote a news release for Charlotte's newspapers. The *First Union Network*, the employee newsletter, described the new program. Training and Development prepared a brochure about it. Marketing created a logo and put it on T-shirts with the "Excellence in Education" slogan.

"Managers will need to be flexible and creative as they encourage more employees to participate in the schools, while also meeting the tough goals in their business units."

Update on Time-off for Schools in Company Newsletter, 15 Months Later

Corporate President John Georgius, writing in the July 1991 edition of *First Union Network*, dedicated to the company's school volunteer programs, praised parents and other employees who had helped schools and said "managers will need to be flexible and creative as they encourage more employees to participate in the schools, while also meeting the tough goals in their business units. So far I've been very impressed with the way managers have struck this balance — and the way employees have supported each other so that everyone has an opportunity to get involved in the schools." Georgius spoke of "parents and volunteers." His emphasis was on many employees helping

many children, not just parents helping their own children.

Three more articles in that issue of *Network* focused on employee volunteering in schools. Still another article described the bank's program of matching employee gifts to education and gave specific examples of donors and recipients. **The article highlighted the fact that you could give to your own child's public school and gave an example of someone who had done so.** There was also a list of 662 employees in 89 cities who, when surveyed, said they had volunteered in schools during 1990-91. In one article, entitled "Juggling Commitments is Easier with Company Support," Marlo Fender, an employee relations staffer in Jacksonville, Florida, who was managing First Union's partnership with Northwestern Junior High, said:

"The key to a successful volunteer experience has to be the active support of your manager."

> "Besides support from home, the key to a successful volunteer experience has to be the **active support of your manager**. In our case here it's made all the difference to have a manager who sees us as individuals and **has enough faith in us to know we can do added work in schools and still accomplish what we need to on the job.**
>
> To make the most of the volunteer time available, we have implemented a **flex-time** program, so we can leave early one day a week. That allows us time with our school."

"In our case here it's made all the difference to have a manager who sees us as individuals and has enough faith in us to know we can do added work in schools and still accomplish what we need to on the job."

Patrice Richman, Marketing Division, who coordinated the 1990-91 partnership between First Union and Charlotte's Irwin Avenue Elementary School, said:

> "If anyone in our division, or at the school, figured only parents of school children would be interested, this partnership changed their minds. Of more than 25 people participating, only two from this division had a child at the school — and only eight were even parents. This is something you do because the schools affect all of us.

A volunteer from the First Union National Bank reads to students.

Juggling doesn't have to be a problem. Schools are flexible; just be sure to communicate in advance when you need to change your volunteer day. Sometimes the kids have field trips and other conflicting activities too, so it's important the school communicates well too....

While this wouldn't work in a situation like ours at Irwin, a lot of volunteers in some situations find it helpful to use a buddy system where you share your role at the school with a coworker and trade tasks with each other without disrupting the students.

"In scheduling, consider planning your volunteer work as a lunchtime activity. I found that it's just not that much time to give — and that it can change my day for the better."

In scheduling, consider planning your volunteer work as a lunchtime activity. I found that it's just not that much time to give — and that it can change my day for the better."

Again, these are not parents speaking about their own children's classes; they are non-parents excited that they can

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share in a caring role with children. Surely that kind of excitement must lead to a supportive atmosphere for parents who leave work to go to their child's school.

These workers speak of flex-time, flexible managers and flexibility in scheduling. They speak about the need to continue to accomplish job responsibilities while doing additional work in the schools. Their comments are reminiscent of the ideas of leaders in Work/Family consulting, including Dana Friedman of the Work and Family Institute, Felice Schwartz of Catalyst, and Professor Lotte Bailyn of MIT's Sloan School, all of whom speak about the need for companies to put more emphasis on workers' results and less emphasis on conventional schedules and time spent on the job. First Union National Bank and other leading corporations have made room for employee participation in schools because their leaders valued it highly and they have struggled with the need to simultaneously maintain high work standards.

These are not parents speaking about their own children's classes; they are non-parents excited that they can share in a caring role with children.

The Education Steering Committee; First Union National Bank Institutionalizes Its Education Support

The Education Task Force evolved into the Corporate Education Steering Committee which oversees the bank's education programs. In the fall of 1990, regional executives in North Carolina appointed education coordinators who became members of the Education Steering Committee. Now each state has its own education coordinator who also belongs to the Education Steering Committee. The presence on the Steering Committee of representatives from the different bank entities has been instrumental in communicating throughout the corporate network a sense of the corporate mission, direction and programs in these education initiatives.

In August 1991, the Corporate Management Committee was given an update on First Union's education programs. This was the first time in the bank's history that a non-banking topic had been brought before the Corporate Management Committee.

John Tate III, executive vice-president for Charlotte commercial banking and a steering committee member, has recently been elected to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board. Corporate President Georgius is still actively involved in corporate education efforts. Frank H. Dunn, Jr., First Union Bank president for North Carolina, is strongly committed to education in Charlotte. (See Appendix IV, p. 57 for article Dunn wrote for the *Charlotte Observer.*)

In 1992, the Marketing Department also targeted to parents an "Excellence in Education" handbook containing about 30 pages of expertise on parenting and education.

Parent Education Programs

In Charlotte, monthly **parent education seminars** are run by the Marketing Department. Employee requests guide speaker choice. Superintendent of Schools John Murphy drew 400 employees when he came to speak. About 25-30 show up for subjects such as "How to Help Your Child With Math." Staff have created a book cart in the training area with books and tapes about parenting and it has become a lending library — with some books mailed to out-of-state employees. In 1992, the Marketing Department **also targeted to parents an "Excellence in Education" handbook containing about 30 pages of expertise on parenting and education.**

Employee Volunteer Programs

During 1991-92, First Union had partnerships in 15 Charlotte schools. The size of the partnerships ranged from a small bank branch with eight volunteers to partnerships that paired a department or a division with a school.

Judy Allison started the school volunteer program in Charlotte during the summer of 1990; 450 employees volunteered the first school year. During 1991-92, First Union had partnerships in 15 Charlotte schools. The size of the partnerships ranged from a small bank branch with eight volunteers to partnerships that paired a department or a division with a school. For example, 60 employees from the Automation Division volunteered at Oaklawn Elementary School. On September 2, 1992, First Union gave its first "Excellence in Education" volunteer award. The presenters were Dr. John Murphy, the school superintendent, and John Georgius, First Union's president.

Problems with Time-off-for-Schools Policy

First Union encountered some difficulties in its time off for school involvement policy. It worked well for exempts* who made up their work at hours of their own choosing, but federal law complicated the non-exempts schedules. Federal labor law requires a company to pay non-exempts time-and-a-half for overtime (more than 38 hours on the clock). With flexible policy, sometimes non-exempts went to schools on company time during the day, but stayed late to make up their work. As a result, the company found itself paying time-and-a-half rather than regular wages for the time non-exempts were in the schools.

With the revised guidelines, all employees, exempt and non-exempt, are allowed four paid hours a month to go to schools as parents or as volunteers. They are encouraged to combine those hours with a lunch hour.

1992's Revised Guidelines for Time-off-for-Schools

During the spring of 1992, First Union gave more definition to its guidelines to deal with these costs. (See Appendix V, pp. 58-59 for copy of 1992 Education Time-Away Policy). With the revised guidelines, all employees, exempt and non-exempt, are allowed four paid hours a month to go to schools as parents or as volunteers. They are encouraged to combine those hours with a lunch hour. These four hours will not be charged against corporate incidental absence policy (used for time-away-from-work absences caused by child sickness, early school closings, medical appointments, etc.). An article on time-off for school involvement in *First Union Ventures* of July 1992 said:

> "to reinforce...teamwork and clarify the corporation's absence guidelines, the Education Steering Committee recently developed a time-away-from-work policy for parental and volunteer involvement in schools.
>
> The new policy suggests that four hours per month of paid time be used by employees who are involved in schools as parents or volunteers."

*Exempt employees are not covered by the section on Overtime Payments in the Labor Standards Act. Non-exempt employees are covered.

In the article, Flo Phillips, personnel director, said:

> "This policy is intended as a **supplement** to the good judgment managers have been using.... We strongly encourage managers to continue to be flexible and creative when reviewing individual requests for time away from work for **parental** or volunteer involvement in the schools.
>
> The policy cites a variety of activities that could qualify for time away from work. They range from **parent-teacher conferences and field trips with an employee's children** to volunteer tutoring and speaking to classes."

"The policy cites a variety of activities that could qualify for time away from work. They range from parent-teacher conferences and field trips with an employee's children to volunteer tutoring and speaking to classes."

The same article quoted Jill Flynn, director of training and development and Education Steering Committee chair, as saying:

> "First Union's commitment to excellence in education is spreading like wildfire at every level all over the corporation. We've seen a lot of teamwork so as many people as possible can get involved in the schools."

Finally, the article printed excerpts from a memo to managers about the new policy from President John Georgius (See Appendix VI, p. 60 for copy of memo):

"First Union's commitment to excellence in education is spreading like wildfire at every level all over the corporation."

> "Throughout our company, I've seen example after example of employees taking to heart First Union's commitment to improve education in the communities we serve...
>
> At the same time, we're asking our employees to work harder than ever before to meet the tough goals we've set for our business units.
>
> As more employees get involved as **parents** or as volunteers, we anticipate managers may have a

greater need for some general guidance about how to maintain this balance between our business needs and our commitment to education. I believe this policy is both fair and flexible."

The article concludes by advising employees to call their unit's Employee Relations representative if they have questions about the new policy.

Thus, First Union's policy has been refined and extended to include **paid time off** for school involvement. Flexibility continues to be central. The door is left open to discussion as needed by managers or employees.

As to positive effects, Judy Allison **quoted an employee who said: "I really feel like this is a benefit. I feel so valued that my bank lets me do this."**

First Union's policy has been refined and extended to include paid time off for school involvement. Flexibility continues to be central. The door is left open to discussion as needed by managers or employees.

I-C. Duke Power Company

Characteristics of the Company

Duke Power, the seventh largest investor-owned utility in the United States, serves a 20,000 square mile area of the central Piedmont of North and South Carolina from Durham, N.C. to Clemson, S.C. Company headquarters are in Charlotte. Revenue from electricity generation in 1991 totalled $3.8 billion. Duke Power has 1.6 million customers and about 18,000 employees, 4,500 of whom work in Charlotte. The company, contrary to most utilities, designs, builds and operates its own power plants.

Duke Power is highly focused on helping its communities. Customers in those communities compete worldwide. Therefore, Duke Power sees its competition as worldwide. Tom Mabry, coordinator of educational services, explained that Duke Power believes it has an obligation to its community, but such commitments are in the company's interest as well "because as our communities grow, Duke Power grows." The corporate

mission statement speaks about helping the company's local communities to prosper.

Duke Power — A Leader in Education Reform

Duke Power has led in education reform. Professional development opportunities for public school teachers include week-long seminars on electricity as it relates to curriculum and summer jobs in teachers' specialty areas. When Duke Power holds an internal management training program, extra spaces are allotted to public school teachers via the state's Department of Public Instruction. Duke Power also has tutoring, mentoring and guest teaching programs. Much of Duke Power's foundation giving is focused on education, specifically pre-college education. The company matches employee gifts to K-12 schools.

When Duke Power holds an internal management training program, extra spaces are allotted to public school teachers via the state's Department of Public Instruction. Duke Power also has tutoring, mentoring and guest teaching programs.

Bill Lee, Duke Power's president and chairman, chaired a 1990 task force that led to the creation in July 1991 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation. The foundation's first chairperson is Richard Priory, Duke Power's executive vice-president of power generation.

Duke Power belongs to the Business Roundtable, a national business leadership organization that has made education its highest priority. In 1991, the North Carolina Business Committee for Education, the North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry (NCCBI), and the North Carolina Public School Forum linked to form the "World Class Schools Coalition" to work at the state level for school reform. Duke Power has been a very active member of these three groups since they were founded.

The 1984 "Power in Education" Program

In 1984, about the time of the publication of "A Nation at Risk," Duke Power initiated a new, innovative program, "Power in Education" (PIE). Created before the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce's appeal for an education focus, PIE was developed at the corporate level to coordinate and provide focus

for community-based education activities that had previously been left up to local office managers. **It included a section on employee time-off for schools.** Articles in the company newspaper helped launch the program. Bill Lee, Duke Power's chairman, gave a powerful example of senior management support for the program when he tutored a child one-on-one. In 1985, PIE won one of President Reagan's Private Sector Initiative Awards while, in 1989, PIE became President Bush's 29th "Point of Light."

Duke Power President and Chairman Bill Lee speaks to students.

Duke Power's James Bavis, vice president of human resources, was a member of the Charlotte Chamber's 1988 Education Task Force that recommended education mission statements and employee time-off for parent-teacher conferences. No doubt he shared with the task force his experience with PIE, already four years old by then.

PIE as Time-Off for Schools

One aspect of PIE **permitted employees to take one hour a week unpaid time plus travel time to go to their children's schools for parent-teacher conferences or for volunteer activities.** For **exempt** employees, this meant that they should use a flexible schedule and make up the time and the work. **Non-exempts** could either receive one hour a week less in

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pay or work an extra hour during regular hours (give up a half hour of lunch for two days, for example). The specifics of the arrangement were to be worked out with the employee's supervisor. Previously, employees had been permitted to do this in individual, localized situations, but PIE was different in that the company gave senior management leadership and strong internal communication to support the program. PIE was not made a part of written formal benefits policy because the focus was still to be on arrangements worked out by employees with their supervisors.

PIE as a Program for Volunteering in Schools

Duke Power representatives went to the 92 local school superintendents in the company's geographical area with a list of possible services that employees could provide.

As a part of PIE, Duke Power representatives went to the 92 local school superintendents in the company's geographical area with a list of possible services that employees could provide. Employees and managers worked together to set up local volunteer programs. In the first year, about 1,300 employees participated. Since then, the program has grown to 2,500-2,800 weekly participants.

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Over the years, Duke Power developed a multitude of projects with local public schools. Partnership programs include "Cities in Schools," "Adopt-a-School," Pre-College Career Development Program for Minorities, and partnerships with individual schools.

"Reward System Alignment Project" — A Revamping of Benefits

As a part of a major benefits restructuring program, developed in 1991 and called the "**Reward System Alignment Project**" (**RSAP**), Duke Power has added a new dimension to PIE. Human Resource managers tuned in to parenting issues among employees. Corporate leaders knew that involved parents were instrumental to their children's educational achievement. Analysts surveyed employees to learn how they valued different rewards. **Some employees expressed concerns about the PIE time-off plan. Some worried that managers viewed an employee's request to go to parent-teacher conferences or to volunteer as a sign that the employee was underworked or undercommitted to the office work.**

"Excellence in Education" — A New Time-off Policy

From those concerns, Duke Power created a new employee benefit called "Excellence in Education" (EIE), introduced in 1992. As a formal employee benefit, **EIE gives all unrepresented employees, exempt and non-exempt, ten hours paid time off each year to spend in academic-related activities either for their own children or for children they are tutoring or mentoring.** Managers who developed EIE believe that a benefit provides employees with more of a sense of ownership than an optional unpaid time-off program offers and, **although primarily aimed at parents**, this benefit covers all employees and **keeps the focus squarely on academic achievement**. EIE supplements the already highly used PIE program. When inaugurated in early 1992, EIE was not available to employees who are in classifications that are represented by unions. (See Appendix VII, p. 61 for a copy of an internal communication to employees about the EIE program).

EIE gives all unrepresented employees, exempt and non-exempt, ten hours paid time off each year to spend in academic-related activities either for their own children or for children they are tutoring or mentoring.

I-D. NationsBank

Characteristics of the Bank

NationsBank is the fourth largest banking company in the United States with about 56,000 employees in markets across the Southeast and in Texas.

The "Education Initiative" — A Bold Plan for Employee Time-off-for-schools

With a press release on July 16, 1990, NationsBank introduced its "Education Initiative," one of Charlotte's first corporate education mission statements. The bank announced that it would let employees take two hours off per week, with pay, to volunteer in schools. **It also encouraged employees "to attend parent-teacher conferences, during paid working hours if necessary."** As part of its "Education Initiative," the bank also said that it would extend its matching gifts program to K-12 (See Appendix VIII, p. 62 for copy of NationsBank's Education

The bank announced that it would let employees take two hours off per week, with pay, to volunteer in schools.

Initiative). Bank CEO Hugh McColl Jr., said:

> "In the juggling of career and family, one ball that seems to have been dropped is school support. Educators have pointed to the number of classroom volunteers diminishing as the number of dual-income households and single working parents has increased. Now, through this initiative, we hope to encourage more than parental involvement. Young people need positive role models and many of our employees who do not have children can make a difference."

"Young people need positive role models and many of our employees who do not have children can make a difference."

From the beginning, this new program emphasized time-off to volunteer in schools, although it included time-off for parents to go to parent-teacher conferences.

Specifics of Time-off for Schools Policy

NationsBank has set up a procedure, delineated in its Employee Handbook, for employees who would like to take part in the school volunteer program. To volunteer, employees need to have been with NationsBank for a year. They need to have a good performance rating, to obtain a manager's approval, to arrange a time which doesn't conflict with business needs, and to set a regular timetable. Employees fill out a form, consult with the manager about getting their work done and send the form to Personnel.

Parent-teacher conferences and parents' attendance at other events at their child's school are handled at the discretion of the manager. The company supports employees going to those events, but wants these requests to be handled in a planned way with an employee's manager because the quantity of time requested could be quite variable — for field trips, etc.

Origins and Rationale for the New Time-off-for-schools Policy

Joe Martin, executive vice president of corporate communications and public affairs, explained that the idea for two

hours paid volunteer time a week originated with an executive in the NationsBank Work/Family area after the Chamber of Commerce had requested a corporate education mission statement.

Martin said that this education policy made sense for NationsBank in two ways: first, improved schools lead to a strengthened regional economy which is good for a bank's business and, secondly, **NationsBank seeks ways to reduce conflict between the career and family needs of its employees and to reduce stress.** Also, the bank likes the fact that the policy relates to employees without children as well as to parents.

Improved schools lead to a strengthened regional economy which is good for a bank's business.

Patricia H. Goolsby, vice-president and regional work/family coordinator, explained that women make up 75 percent of the NationsBank workforce. **She said, "many of our parents are single parents. Because our workforce is diverse and very decentralized, the education initiative is an opportunity for NationsBank to offer support to many of its associates whether they work in one of our headquarter cities or in a branch in El Paso, Texas."**

"Because our workforce is diverse and very decentralized, the education initiative is an opportunity for NationsBank to offer support to many of its associates whether they work in one of our headquarter cities or in a branch in El Paso, Texas."

I-E. Palmer & Cay/Carswell, Inc.

Palmer & Cay/Carswell, Inc. is an example of a small business's approach to the adoption of employee release for schools policy. In this instance, the company's leader, a take-charge person, has the flexibility of size that permits him to move quickly and simply to put in to action a program that he values highly.

The company's CEO, as chair of the Charlotte Chamber's business-education Partnership Committee, has left his imprint on the Chamber's total partnership program as well as that of his own company.

In addition, this company demonstrates the high value it places on achievement and on education by requiring its employees to take part in continuing education.

Characteristics of the Company — And Its Leader

Palmer & Cay/Carswell, a 124-year-old regional company in the insurance and brokerage business, includes a holding company and three independently-run operating companies. The Charlotte operating company's 19 staff members sell insurance products or perform customer services and support. Cecil R. Cooke, president of the Charlotte operating company, describes his company as entrepreneurial.

Cooke has shown enthusiastic leadership as chair of the Chamber of Commerce's Partnerships Committee. In the fall of 1990, he chaired a breakfast to challenge businesses to build school partnerships. Between February 1991 and June 1992, the number of business-education partnerships in Charlotte grew from 30 to 140.

Cooke explained that he came to Charlotte in 1989 and turned to the Chamber right away, looking for leadership involvement. Being new in town, he saw the Chamber as a way to develop a network and he also believed in corporate involvement in the community. Cooke described Charlotte as a city in which a newcomer can exert leadership and make a mark, as compared to some more tradition-bound cities. He noted that Deborah Pinchak's strong leadership had helped the Chamber's education programs succeed.

Cooke sat down with his management committee and told them that these ideas looked pretty easy to him and that if no one objected, he would "just make it a policy."

No one objected, so he did.

Adoption of Time-off-for-schools Policy

When he received information from the Chamber requesting an education mission statement and support of parental release for parent-teacher conferences, Cooke sat down with his management committee and told them that these ideas looked pretty easy to him and that if no one objected, he would "just make it a policy." No one objected, so he did. He then sent the information from the Chamber to the two other operating companies with a note saying that they might want to do this.

Cooke told his employees that if they needed time-off to go to parent-teacher conferences or for other family needs, they should feel free to take it. He told them, "We'll trust

you'll make it up and get your work done."

Cooke said that the Department of Labor rules for non-exempt workers make the use of flextime harder for his company. However, for productivity, he looks at industry norms for revenue produced per employee and he sees that his employees are achieving above those norms.

Cooke told his employees that if they needed time-off to go to parent-teacher conferences or for other family needs, they should feel free to take it. He told them, "We'll trust you'll make it up and get your work done."

Palmer & Cay/Carswell's School Partnership

When Cooke heard about the Chamber's business-school partnership idea, he asked his four-person management committee to decide in two weeks whether the firm should take part. In two weeks, they said "yes." Next they did an internal poll to find out who wanted to volunteer, which part of the city employees preferred, and which age group of children they would like. They discussed the age group question the most. The employees preferred elementary. Cooke told them he thought there was more need at a higher age level. They compromised and found a junior high school just 1/2 mile from their office.

Cooke described the school's new principal as "...like me. When she has a new problem to solve, she doesn't mind rolling up her sleeves and tackling it." Cooke says that he doesn't like to sit in committee meetings. He likes to make things happen. Together he and the principal looked at needs and set priorities. The first year 12 of 19 employees volunteered. During 1991-92, the second year, all employees took part. Since volunteers saw room for their own improvement as tutors, they began the second year by inviting teachers from the school to come to the office to teach them how to be better tutors. Cooke, himself, took on a "big brother" mentoring relationship.

However, for productivity, he looks at industry norms for revenue produced per employee and he sees that his employees are achieving above those norms.

The school partnership is always on the agenda of the firm's quarterly off-site meeting. In the spring of 1992, the company invited the school's principal to the meeting and asked her to "raise the bar" for them as volunteers. She, in turn, challenged them to "raise the bar" for the school.

Benefits of School Partnership for Palmer & Cay/Carswell

Cooke believes the partnership brings three benefits to his company. He says that employees feel better about themselves, they feel better about their job, and they don't fall down on the job.

Other Palmer & Cay/Carswell Education Programs

There is more to Palmer & Cay/Carswell Inc.'s education program. The company requires each employee to take part in some sort of continuing education. If they don't over a period of time, employees could lose their job. Twice a year each employee has a performance evaluation and a "career check." The company helps the employee develop an education plan and it reimburses tuition. Employees could earn a college degree under this plan.

Cooke was quick to point out that the coaching job also had payoffs in mentoring experiences for boys with absent fathers...

Company Culture

Cecil Cooke conveys a sense of energy and manages to combine high performance expectations with a supportive atmosphere and a sense of play — the latter expressed through the story of an employee who had created and coached a new golf team at the junior high school and, in so doing, had managed to enjoy the golf course while being helpful. However, Cooke was quick to point out that the coaching job also had payoffs in mentoring experiences for boys with absent fathers and in exposing young people to the sport of golf who might never have known golf otherwise...and that his employees worked within a framework of meeting performance expectations whatever their volunteering entailed.

Other heads of small businesses and entrepreneurs who have grown their own businesses have expressed similar direct approaches to requests for policy on releasing parents for parent-teacher conferences. For example, a high technology entrepreneur who was highly committed to building school-business partnerships in Massachusetts said that he regarded the American Electronics Association's request for employee time-off for schools as like "apple pie and motherhood" — hard to object to

and easy to implement. Smaller size can provide opportunity for flexibility within the context of attentive oversight.

II. Catawba County, North Carolina

II-A. Newton-Conover Schools: Project PIECES

A Small Town Innovates

The Newton-Conover school district comprises two small towns about sixty miles west of Charlotte in semi-rural Catawba County, North Carolina, but it has an innovative "school-business" program that was written up in the *Wall Street Journal* on September 26, 1991. **In Newton-Conover, the guidance counselors go monthly to selected factories to bring employees news about their childrens' school progress.**

Origins of the Program

Susan McGee, a middle school guidance counselor, said that it all began in 1987 during a brainstorming session she had with Larry Harris, the principal of Newton-Conover's only middle school. McGee said, "I'd been batting around the idea of doing something with industry and Larry had read about school programs in China and Japan. Together we came up with the idea of taking the school counselors to the workers."

"I'd been batting around the idea of doing something with industry and Larry had read about school programs in China and Japan. Together we came up with the idea of taking the school counselors to the workers."

One factor that made the program seem appropriate was the fact that **Catawba County, North Carolina, has the largest percentage of working mothers of any area in the United States.** Many work in hosiery or furniture mills, others in manufacture of fiber optic cable, another large local industry. "Assembly line workers in industry have less flexibility to leave

the workplace than desk workers, so we decided to go meet them on their own turf," McGee recounted. "Usually, they are paid by the hour and can't afford to take time off to go to their child's school. Besides, many people don't have such great memories of their own schooling and might be hesitant to set foot in a school. We wanted to take away any reason parents might have to not come to their child's school." (See Appendix IX, pp. 63-64 for list of goals and objectives for the program.)

"We wanted to take away any reason parents might have to not come to their child's school."

On September 24, 1987, McGee and Joann Specs from the Catawba County Council of Adolescents met with Hugh Gaither, vice president of Ridgeview, Inc., a nearby hosiery maker, to present their proposal. Within two days, they received a positive response. Project PIECES ("Parents, Industry, Educators Cooperating for Educational Success") was launched.

Background on Ridgeview, Inc..

Ridgeview, Inc. is a family-owned business that manufactures panty hose and socks. Based in Newton, N.C., a small town of 9,000, Ridgeview employs 380 people at its home site. The company also has plants in Johnson City, Tennessee, in Fort Payne, Alabama and in Tralee, Ireland. Ridgeview entered Ireland in 1985 to gain a foothold in the European Common Market.

Gaither is grateful that counselors come to the factory. He observed "happier parents make better employees."

Reasons Ridgeview, Inc. Liked the Program

About 85 percent of Ridgeview's Newton, N.C. employees are women. For most, their job is the second job in the family. Catawba County is well-off and there is a labor shortage. Albert Gaither, president, said that if he needed more employees, he would have a hard time finding them — especially since hosiery mills pay less than fiber optic cable plants — so he wants to find ways to keep workers' loyalty.

Gaither pays workers by the piece. They can also earn a 10 percent attendance bonus. Gaither is grateful that counselors come to the factory. He observed "happier parents make better employees." He said that Ridgeview, Inc. also started the New-

ton plant's daycare facility to support employees in their parenting roles.

Edith Grimes, personnel director, explained that Ridgeview, Inc. is a community-oriented company. It was the first business in the county to have on-site daycare. Susan Gaither Jones, a vice-president at Ridgeview and a professional mother herself, started the daycare in 1989. Hugh Gaither, vice-president, is Newton's mayor. With four children in the public schools, he also meets with a counselor when they come to the plant. Albert Gaither, president, was on the Newton-Conover School Board in the 1960s and 1970s, serving as chairman for four years. He is on the Education Task Force of the Foresight Committee, a county-wide economic analysis group. He is also a county hospital trustee.

Albert Gaither said that educational achievement was low in Catawba County compared to the state and that North Carolina ranked low in the nation. Yet the proportion of dollars in the education budget is high both in Catawba County and at the state level in North Carolina. He saw a need to raise the public's expectations for achievement in education.

The system's eight guidance counselors go to each of two sites once a month and see each parent for 15 minutes. At Ridgeview, Inc., they meet parents in the Personnel Office and in an adjoining room close to the employees' work area.

Implementation of Project PIECES

The system's eight guidance counselors (one in each of three elementary schools, two in the middle school, and three in the high school) go to each of two sites once a month and see each parent for 15 minutes. At Ridgeview, Inc., they meet parents in the Personnel Office and in an adjoining room close to the employees' work area. All eligible parents at Ridgeview participate — about 40 in 1991-92.

At Regency Home Fashions, a second site, General Manager Joe Long gives up his office for the sessions since space is more limited there. They had about 27 participants in 1991-92. Even grandparents take part — if the parents sign a release form. Joe Long, Regency's general manager, also active in education, serves on a systemwide curriculum advisory committee with emphasis on "Tech Prep."

Counselors prepare for site visits by reviewing cumulative records, report cards, and teachers' comments for each child. Counselors try to emphasize the positive. They discuss each grade with the parents. Parents can ask for a follow-up conference with a teacher, but teachers confer during two daytime planning periods, so parents would have to go to school for that.

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Susan McGee said that the in-house coordinators at both Ridgeview and Regency Home Fashions have a key role as schedulers. Edith Grimes put a well-written article in Ridgeview's newsletter, describing ways to make a parent-teacher conference successful. (See Appendix X, p. 65 for article.)

Positive Results of Project PIECES

Truancy no longer exists among children with parents in the program and counselors have built relationships with parents who have not come near a school since they graduated or dropped out. Jeanne Brannock, another counselor added, "Fathers love it. Participation among fathers has soared!" For divorced fathers who don't have custody, these counselling visits might be the first time the father has seen a child's report card.

Truancy no longer exists among children with parents in the program and counselors have built relationships with parents who have not come near a school since they graduated or dropped out.

The high school counselors have worked with parents on financial planning for college, a service which families normally don't get unless they go to the counselor to request it. Counsellors have also found these sessions helpful in telling parents about "Tech Prep," a new countywide program to prepare students for community college, for four year degrees or for direct entry into industry after high school.

Susan McGee says the Ridgeview visits have become a part of school life. Kids passing her in the hall ask, "Is this the week you go to Ridgeview?" or say "Please don't tell my mom I did that!" If parents have a conflict, they now send word ahead of time asking to be rescheduled. Sometimes parents will come with notes they have prepared ahead of time for the conference.

Testimonials

Jim McCormick, director of product development/ quality control and the father of a sixth grade daughter and a fourth grade son said, "The kids tell us what they want us to know. When the counselors come, we can pick up on some things the kids might not say, good and bad. Also, it helps to reinforce the learning process because the kids know that communication is being made with the parents."

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Jack Houston, a supervisor in the Seaming Department of the Ladies Hosiery Division, has a son who has recently graduated and gone away to college. He said, "The fact that the counselors come regularly can head off problems. Sometimes it helps keep grades from dropping. The children know that their parents are keeping track of their schoolwork. Also, parents lose their bonus if they leave early; they don't lose it when the counselors come here."

Extensions of Project PIECES Effort

In 1991, after considering the question of employees taking time from work to go on school field trips, Ridgeview changed the vacation benefit. Previously, all hourly workers received 10 days paid vacation a year. Now, beginning with the sixth year, an employee can earn an additional day a year to a maximum of 15 vacation days after 10 years of service. Workers can use a vacation day for school trips or they can request a day off without pay. Supervisors decide whether to approve. This is practice, not policy.

"The fact that the counselors come regularly can head off problems. Sometimes it helps keep grades from dropping."

Ridgeview, Inc. has other education commitments. Edith Grimes speaks at the middle school and hosts a class for a plant tour. In September 1991, she initiated a program in which Ridgeview employees tutor at local schools one hour a week with pay on company time. In the beginning, five women, all production line workers, chose to do this. Grimes, herself, headed the Foresight Committee's task force on "Social Issues Affecting the Workforce."

McGee said that the school counselors would like to be able to visit more factories, but they have put expansion of Project PIECES on hold while digesting two other new programs: Tech-Prep and year-round schooling.

Project PIECES Spreads The Word

Susan McGee has presented Project PIECES in a number of forums. In June 1989, she spoke at the School Guidance Conference at Little Rock, Arkansas. In February 1990, she gave a talk to the North Carolina League of Middle Schools' conference while in October of 1990, she made a presentation at the National/International Middle Schools Conference in Toronto, Canada. In May 1992, she went to Greensboro, North Carolina to speak at the Support Personnel Conference for North Carolina and she also gave a workshop in May to the Catawba Valley Hosiery Association. In 1990, Edith Grimes of Ridgeview, Inc. spoke to the Piedmont Personnel Association. (In 1991 she served as president of that group). In addition, in 1988, the Catawba County Employment Security Commission nominated Ridgeview, Inc. for the North Carolina's Governor's Small Business Education Award and Ridgeview won the award.

During the three-week "breaks," everyone will vacation the first week; during the second week reinforcement will be offered to those scoring below the 80th percentile.

In addition to the *Wall Street Journal,* the project has been written up in the *New York Times,* the National Education Association's journal, *The American School Board Journal* and *The Executive Educator.* The counselors receive several calls a month asking about Project PIECES.

What Next For Newton-Conover?

The Newton-Conover school system started a year-round school program in July 1992. One of four school systems in North Carolina to pilot this program, some of Newton-Conover's schools will hold class for nine weeks followed by a three-week break. The number of required days in school will remain the same, but the year will be divided into quarters. During the three-week "breaks," everyone will vacation the first week; during the second week reinforcement will be offered to those scoring below the 80th percentile, while all are offered

enrichment classes during the third week. Teachers are paid extra for the reinforcement and enrichment weeks. The goal is to bring more children up to grade level. Teachers also hope to minimize the reteaching that takes place in the fall.

There are three school systems in Catawba County: Newton-Conover, Hickory and the county school system. The next section will tell about employee-release-for-schools policy developed by the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce for businesses and all three school systems.

II-B. Catawba County Chamber Of Commerce

Characteristics of the Area

Located over an hour northwest of Charlotte in rural North Carolina, Catawba County's traditional industries of furniture, textile and hosiery mills have been complemented by the fiber optic cable, electronics and printing industries. The county is now the nation's largest producer of fiber optic cable. Catawba County sees itself as progressive and focused. Hickory, the county's largest town, was quick to seek a railroad line in railroading's early days and, in 1913, it was the first North Carolina city to adopt the county manager system of government. Total population of this 396 square mile county is 120,000; 20,000 children attend the county's three public school systems. Lenoir-Rhyne College and Catawba County Community College offer higher education to the community.

Catawba County's Chamber of Commerce has promoted business involvement with the schools since 1971, the era of desegregation.

Business-Education Efforts in Catawba County

Catawba County's Chamber of Commerce has promoted business involvement with the schools since 1971, the era of desegregation. The first economic analysis by the county's FORESIGHT Committee, a strategic planning body, led in 1987 to the establishment of the Council for Educational Excellence (CEE) and to the creation of the Catawba Compact, an agreement to tie increased county education funding to measurable school progress. The Compact set a goal to reach the

achievement levels of the top 10 percent (i.e. top 14 systems) of North Carolina's schools by 1991. The County agreed to maintain local financial support above the amount averaged by North Carolina's top fourteen systems.

In 1987, the Council for Educational Excellence (CEE), hired Peter Negroni from New York City to be the CEE's first director and to develop new education programs in Catawba County. During Negroni's tenure, the CEE initiated a number of new programs to improve education. It worked on school-business partnerships, on site-based management in schools, on collaboration with local colleges and, with the aid of local businesses, it began to introduce total quality management to schools.

The CEE initiated a number of new programs to improve education. It worked on school-business partnerships, on site-based management in schools, on collaboration with local colleges and, with the aid of local businesses, it began to introduce total quality management to schools.

In 1989, the FORESIGHT Committee published *The Environmental Scan, 1989: A Second Look at the Economy in Catawba County, N.C.* From data in that study, the group developed Mission Statements that it gave to new task forces in January 1991. After a year's work, the Education Task Force in January 1992 set new strategic goals for the 90s.

In 1991, the CEE was reorganized to include nine business people, three school board chairs, three school superintendents, the county manager and the chair of the county commissioners. The CEE and the Chamber of Commerce agreed, in November 1991, to work as a unit to serve as the bridge between the business community and the schools. The CEE became an affiliate of the Chamber of Commerce, i.e., the two groups work as a unit, but each has its own budget.

The County Board of Commissioners asked the Chamber and the CEE to coordinate the setting of strategies to meet the six National 2000 Education Goals (created in 1990 and fleshed out in presidential policy in April 1991) and the nine North Carolina 2000 Goals. The Catawba County 2000 Task Force, formed by the CEE and the Chamber, appointed chairs for each of the six goals committees. Within the structure of the America 2000 concept, many branches of the community mobilized to build new services in education and in social

welfare. The America 2000 and the North Carolina 2000 policies emphasize parents' involvement in their children's education.

In July 1992, Catawba County was named one of eight North Carolina "2000 Communities." To earn that designation a community must:

- adopt the six national education goals;
- organize a community-wide planning team;
- show commitment by having completed some of the planning process; and
- develop a system for reporting progress on the initiatives to the community.

An employee seminar on parenting at a business in Catawba County.

State-level Worker Release for Schools Policy

North Carolina's elected state Superintendent of Schools, Bobby Ethridge, a businessman himself, is a strong advocate of parents' involvement in their children's education. In 1990, North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction, under Ethridge's leadership, developed a "20 Point Plan for Reshaping K-12 Education in North Carolina." Point #5 urges employers to create policy to permit their employees to take up to eight

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hours school involvement leave a year so that they can take part in efforts to improve student learning. (See Appendix XI, pp. 66 for text of Point #5).

In 1991, the Board of Commissioners of Catawba County adopted a policy to permit its employees to take time from work to go to parent-teacher conferences and to otherwise participate in activities at schools in the county.

In 1991, North Carolina's Legislature passed a law directing local boards of education to work with business leaders to encourage employers to provide parents time to attend conferences with their children's teachers. (See Appendix XII, p. 67 for a copy of that law).

Local Governments Adopt Worker Release for Schools Policy

In 1991, the Board of Commissioners of Catawba County adopted a policy to permit its employees to take time from work to go to parent-teacher conferences and to otherwise participate in activities at schools in the county. In February 1992, the Catawba County Schools and the Hickory Public Schools passed the same type of policy for their employees. In tracing the impetus for their policy development, the school systems referred to the 1991 state law, the county Board of Commissioners' action, and the work of the Chamber and the CEE.

Worker Release for Schools Policy Recommended by the Chamber

One plank in the Agreement asks companies to "consider establishing the State's 'Eight Hours School Involvement Leave' or other programs to provide employees time off to participate in school activities."

The Chamber of Commerce encourages employers to give paid time to employees for school conferences with teachers and counselors as well as for tutoring and mentoring activities.

Specifically, the Parental Involvement Committee of the Chamber of Commerce developed a formal "Company Parental Agreement" that it asks companies to sign. One plank in the Agreement asks companies to "consider establishing the State's 'Eight Hours School Involvement Leave' or other programs to provide employees time off to participate in school activities." (See Appendix XIII, p. 68 for a copy of this official agreement that the company signs). The Chamber also developed an agreement for employee parents to sign, pledging their commit-

ment to four measures to help with their children's education. (See Appendix XIV, p. 69 for a copy of the "Parental Agreement.")

Implementation of Chamber's Worker Release for School Policy

The Chamber started the initiative for the Company Parental Agreement in 1990 and built it slowly. Nancy Burleson, the Chamber's vice-president for education and leadership, said that they originally wrote to 40 companies to tell them about it. When a company expresses interest, a member of the Chamber's Parental Involvement Committee visits the CEO. For some companies, the decision to join was discussed over months and was not easy; thus, the commitment is taken quite seriously. Companies have been concerned about possible abuse of the worker release for schools policy by parents and they have wanted to take time to convince their managers of its value. By July 1992, 16 companies had signed the agreement. The Parental Involvement Committee set a goal of adding 10 companies to the list in 1992.

Success Stories

As of February 1992, the following companies located in Catawba County provided release time for parent-teacher conferences: Prodelin Corporation, Regal Manufacturing, C.R. Laine, Century Furniture, Moss Marlow, Catawba Transportation, Shuford Mills, Duke Power, NationsBank, First Union Bank, and Wachovia Bank. Almost all of them write articles about their company's education commitment in the company newsletter and they also sponsor seminars on parenting for their employees.

In addition to parent release for parent-teacher conferences, the Agreement calls for employee seminars on parenting and employee volunteering in schools.

Extensions of Policy

In addition to parent release for parent-teacher conferences, the Agreement calls for employee seminars on parenting and employee volunteering in schools. The Chamber offers to help with both of these programs and it has developed a list of experts at community agencies and at the colleges who can give seminars. In a program that has grown over nine years, about 150 local businesses have a school partnership.

It is as if no stone is being left unturned in this effort to raise the educational aspirations and achievement of an entire area, a semi-rural region of 120,000 people.

The Catawba County change effort is comprehensive. Parental and community support of children is being tackled by social welfare agencies and by higher education as well as by business and the public schools. Adult literacy is another piece of the pie, fueled both by an America 2000 goal and by the realization that illiterate parents are unlikely to raise well-educated children. It is as if no stone is being left unturned in this effort to raise the educational aspirations and achievement of an entire area, a semi-rural region of 120,000 people. Parental release for parent-teacher conferences is but one ingredient in this over-all panorama, but this culture of comprehensive problem-solving makes parental release for parent-teacher conferences easier and more synergistic.

In 1990, *Inc.* magazine ranked Catawba County as the 12th most entrepreneurial area in the United States. As in Charlotte, the focus on strategic planning and the promotion of the community's long-range economic growth have led to goal-setting for local education improvement and, subsequently, to increased business and education cooperation. Out of this forward-looking and cooperative atmosphere and with concomitant support from state government, the Chamber of Commerce in Catawba County has exerted leadership in the development of Worker Release for Schools policy. Once again, economics, strategic planning, and cooperation are key.

Summary

Businesses need better educated workers. Schools need responsive parents and concerned citizens to support teachers and help expand the children's world. Employees need to feel supported in their parental roles as well as their job roles. Consultants are pointing the way to employee evaluation on the basis of accomplishment and productivity rather than time logged at the desk or at the workstation. The nation has to compete in a changing world; meanwhile, stretched-out families need to survive, and we have to find ways to help them thrive. A business policy of permitting employee time off for parent-teacher conferences and important school events can be one way to problem-solve, one part of the equation.

A business policy of permitting employee time off for parent-teacher conferences and important school events can be one way to problem-solve, one part of the equation.

Not everyone can leave their jobs; for some the nature of the work setting means that everything would stop if they were away. But people in those kinds of jobs — such as EMTs, hospital radiologists, firemen — often work in shifts that turn up a free weekday periodically. Flexible conference scheduling and pre-planning by and with teachers can help those people come for conferences on their day off. In other special instances, counselors might reach out to a parent group in a nearby factory or hospital where there is a critical mass of employee parents — as the counselors in the Newton-Conover Schools did. Flexibility is key, both in the office and in the schools. The problems are challenging — well-educated workers for employers, higher academic achievement in the nation's schools, juggling work and family life for parents. But a number of businesses in North Carolina and elsewhere are meeting the challenge with energy, persistence and enthusiasm. Hopefully, the stories in these pages will inspire other companies and other school systems to try some similar ideas and develop their own programs.

Flexibility is key, both in the office and in the schools.

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The Houston Business Promise

"The Business Community's Commitment to Excellence in Public Education"

We believe that every individual in the Houston area should achieve a quality education. Furthermore, we believe that literate, thoughtful and effective citizens are critical to the fulfillment of individual and family lives, to a healthy competitive economy and to a viable democracy. We, as responsible adults, have both the privilege and the duty to prepare our young people to assume responsibility for the future of our community and nation by assuring a strong education system.

While the primary responsibility for educating our young people lies with our education system and within the family structure, the business community is uniquely positioned to reinforce these responsibilities through corporate policies and programs which will help assure that every child in the Houston area receives a quality education. The Houston Business Promise will communicate to all of our employees our commitment to quality education. We will:

- Encourage employees with children to support and be involved in the learning process of their children, including attendance at parent/teacher conferences.
- Support a school or schools through a meaningful partnership effort including employee volunteer involvement, sharing of expertise, facilities and equipment and/or financial assistance. This may range from adopting a school to participating in existing programs.
- Assist in preparing students for the workforce. This may include providing information in the classroom and exposure to the workplace through plant/office visits and summer or part-time jobs.
- Assure graduates of Houston area high schools the opportunity to interview for available jobs. Increase student awareness of job opportunities and requirements through school career days and other appropriate means.
- Support the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers and administrators. This may include summer jobs for teachers, small financial grants to assist teachers in classroom projects, teacher and/or administrator recognition, and other programs in support of this goal.
- Encourage students to pursue education beyond the high school level.
- Encourage employees without high school diplomas to complete the requirements for a diploma or the equivalent.
- Endeavor to be informed and communicate with employees on important educational issues.

This brochure is designed to help you and your company implement The Houston Business Promise.

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1100 Milam 25th Floor Houston TX 77002 713-658-2460

What is The Houston Business Promise?

The Houston Business Promise is a voluntary, eight-point commitment by local businesses to help improve the quality of education in the Houston area. It is designed to foster a close and continuing working relationship between Houston-area businesses and local school systems. Based on proven programs, it addresses the highest priority educational needs in all grades--pre-school through high school.

How can my company help?

Your company can sign and implement The Houston Business Promise! By doing so, you are agreeing to carry out the eight points of the program.

Below each point of The Houston Business Promise, we have included some examples of ways companies can participate. These ideas and suggestions are certainly not all-inclusive. They are simply meant to show a range of opportunities for involvement and are intended to stimulate each company's thinking in terms of its own commitment. They include things you can do both within your company and externally.

Why are these efforts important?

The business community must take a leadership role to help assure that every youth in the Houston area receives a quality education. As it is, approximately 40 percent of area high school students drop out and even more do not master minimum skills in reading, writing and arithmetic. They thus fail to become productive citizens of society.

Within the next decade as many as three jobs out of four will require technical training beyond the high school level. By the year 2000, more than 40 percent of all new jobs will require the highest skill level, compared with about 25 percent today.

Without qualified people in the local workforce, the economy of the Houston area will not be able to experience healthy growth. Education is the key to a successful future, both in business and in quality of life.

The education of our youth is one of our biggest challenges today. The schools cannot do the job alone. They need our help!

Eight Points of The Houston Business Promise

and examples of how your company can help:

1 Encourage employees with children to support and be involved in the learning process of their children, including attendance at parent/teacher conferences.

- Use the company newsletter to publicize employee involvement in schools and emphasize the importance of parental participation in parent/teacher meetings and other school activities.
- Help employees attend parent/teacher conferences by allowing time off with pay, or compensatory time, or by adjusting work schedules.
- Work with schools to schedule conferences at off-work times.

2 Support a school or schools through a meaningful partnership effort including employee volunteer involvement, sharing of expertise, facilities and equipment and/or financial assistance. This may range from adopting a school or participating in existing programs.

- Form a meaningful partnership with a school or schools. Partnerships can include a wide range of activities, such as:
  - Encouraging and recognizing employee volunteers for tutoring, presenting mini-courses, judging projects, explaining career options, etc;
  - Providing release time for employee volunteers;
  - Contributing materials, equipment and meeting space;
  - Inviting students for plant visits and field trips;
  - Sponsoring extra-curricular activities such as math/science/art/computer clubs, etc;
- Contribute direct financial aid and/or volunteer support to existing groups which have successful ongoing programs aimed at meeting educational needs. [See sampling of key organizations and their programs on back page.]

3 Assisting in preparing students for the work force. This may include providing information in the classroom and exposure to the workplace through plant/office visits and summer or part-time jobs.

- Provide summer and/or part-time jobs for students.
- Conduct informative classroom sessions for students concerning job opportunities and what is expected of a good employee.
- Sponsor plant/office visits by classes and/or individual students.
- Encourage employees, particularly former students at individual schools, to serve as role models and as examples of their graduates' success.
- Invite a group of students as guests for lunch in your plant or office once a month.

4 Assure graduates of Houston-area high schools the opportunity to interview for available jobs. Increase student awareness of job opportunities and requirements through school "career days" and other appropriate means.

- Provide literature to schools on your company's specific job needs and the requirements applicants must meet.
- Work with school administrators to effectively communicate job opportunities and requirements to students.
- Advertise through the schools that your company will interview qualified students for available jobs.

5 Support the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers and administrators. This may include summer jobs for teachers, small financial grants to assist teachers in classroom projects, teacher and/or administrator recognition, and other programs in support of this goal.

- Provide "hospitality" programs for teacher candidates, including transportation, lodging or other support for out-of-town candidates.
- Hold or contribute to "teacher appreciation" events.
- Provide special discounts to teachers for merchandise and services.
- Assist new teachers in setting up banking and credit arrangements, getting utility hookups and learning about the community.
- Provide loans, scholarships and other incentives to encourage top quality students to study for and enter the teaching profession.
- Provide salary supplements for teachers through cooperative programs such as summer jobs and scholarships for advanced training.
- Provide grants to support innovative teaching ideas and classroom projects.

6 Encourage employees without high school diplomas to complete the requirements for a diploma or the equivalent.

- Tell employees how they can earn a diploma or GED and advise them of support they can get from the company and other sources.
- Adjust work schedules and/or provide scholarship assistance for employees going back to school.
- Use company publications to emphasize the importance of education; spotlight success stories.
- In general, create a positive and encouraging atmosphere for education.

7 Encourage students to pursue education beyond the high school level.

- Provide information on the increasing skill requirements of the workforce that today's students will be entering.
- Help advise students or career opportunities, area college programs and scholarship availabilities.
- Provide information on college entrance requirements for specific degree programs.
- Work through area organizations which provide mentors and scholarships to encourage students to stay in school and go to college.

8 Endeavor to be informed and communicate with employees on important educational issues.

- Utilize the resources of the Education Staff of the Greater Houston Partnership's Chamber of Commerce Division
- Participate in Education Committee activities and sponsored events (e.g. Executive Class Day).
- Attend school board and PTA/PTO meetings.
- Use company publications to advise employees of current issues and needs in education, of the support they can get from the company, and opportunities for them to help through volunteer efforts.
- Meet with local school officials to share ideas of mutual interest in the management and administration of the schools.

Education Alliance

There are some organizations with successful programs that are meeting educational needs in the Houston Area. Your company could work with these and/or other groups to implement your commitment to The Houston Business Promise.

The Greater Houston Partnership's Education Committee - Recruits businesses to assist the schools with partnerships and through other organizations (658-2460).

Private Sector Initiatives - After-school enrichment programs for latch-key kids; city-wide summer jobs program; youth 2000 - preparation of youth for the workforce (659-1804).

Houston Business Committee for Educational Excellence - Teacher and principal mini-grants; student and teacher recognition programs (652-7477).

Communities in Schools - Dropout prevention; drug-abuse prevention; remedial education; career development and placement (654-1515).

Houston Job Training Partnership Council - Dropout prevention; summer and part-time job programs; employment training and services; directs federal funds to other provider organizations (654-1919).

Junior Achievement - Teaches private enterprise concepts and applied economics (681-3505).

Boy Scouts of America - Broad education program in many schools; Explorer Scout programs (659-8111).

Rice Student Volunteer Program (RSVP) - Tutors and mentors for secondary level "at-risk" students; on-campus music lessons (527-4970).

I Have a Dream-Houston - Dropout prevention; mentors; scholarships for sixth graders who stay in school and graduate (523-7326).

The Houston Public Library - Broad variety of services for schools and students; literacy programs (247-2700).

The Metropolitan Organization - Church-based organization; emphasizes parental involvement in keeping "at-risk" students in school (868-1429).

Houston Metropolitan Ministries - Dropout prevention; child abuse prevention and care; other church-based programs (520-4603).

Be Cool, Stay in School - Encourages Hispanic students to stay in school and say "no" to drugs (926-3025).

The Houston Area Urban League - Tutorial assistance; parental involvement workshops; other programs for schools in the minority community (526-5127).

Association for the Advance of Mexican Americans - Dropout prevention; helps "at-risk" students stay in school; alternative high school for dropouts (926-9491).

Gulf Coast Alliance for Minorities in Engineering - Prepares minority students for college and careers in math, science and engineering (759-5313).

Young Audiences - Bring Performing and visual arts to schools through educational programs (654-9114).

Resources Available

The education program of the Greater Houston Partnership's Chamber of Commerce Division provides:

1. Information about business/school programs currently being done in Houston and across the nation.
2. Business contacts that will explain how the education program is structured in their companies, as well as assist you in getting your own started.
3. Periodic seminars to help you:
   - Know the needs of area school districts;
   - Keep your business/school programs current and productive;
   - Be better informed on education issues;
   - Know other non-profit organizations working in education.
4. Data on school districts and their partnership for business involvement.

GREATER HOUSTON PARTNERSHIP

Chamber of Commerce Division
Economic Development Division
World Trade Division

GET TOGETHER FOR KIDS℠

Parent / teacher conferences make a difference.

American Electronics Association

Appendix II

Linking Home and School --Employers Make a Difference

American education, once the envy of the world and backbone of our progress and prosperity, has faltered to the point of crisis. While school reform strategies are essential, one fact remains: America's K-12 education crisis is not just about what is happening in elementary and high school classrooms.

Parental involvement continues to be, as it always has been, a key predictor of academic outcomes. But, parents report that involvement in school is not as easy as it once was. Why? Most parents work--many at great distances from home, family and school. The result: employers now have unprecedented access to parents--and untapped opportunity to help parents make effective parent-teacher collaboration a priority.

AEA's *Get Together for Kids* Parent-Teacher Conference Campaign is mobilizing the electronics industry to respond to this opportunity. *Get Together for Kids* enlists AEA member companies to encourage the parent-employees in the electronics industry's 2.5 million-strong workforce to strengthen involvement in their child's education. AEA companies that join the initiative agree to emphasize the value of the home-school connection by encouraging the use of "paid leave" for parent-workers to attend parent-teacher conferences--the time honored way of establishing and nurturing parent-teacher collaboration.

AEA's research indicated that while most companies have flexible "paid leave" packages that can accommodate parent-teacher conferences, in practice managers too often give parent-employees negative feedback when asked to permit excused paid leave for such meetings.

Vital to *Get Together for Kids* success, therefore, is a corporate communications strategy that lets employees know that parent-teacher collaboration is critical--and that company management supports such collaboration. An AEA-developed "communications kit" helps companies create an effective *Get Together for Kids* program, including ideas to help parent-employees make parent-teacher meetings more effective. The kits, developed with grants from Applied Materials, Northrop, Measurex and others, also include creative materials to help companies get the word out to media, schools and the community.

Program implementation cost to the company is minimal. In fact, in most cases company participation in *Get Together for Kids* leverages an already existing employee benefit towards enhancing the outlook for today's youth. The payback in employee moral and retention, teacher and community appreciation will be great.

Strong parent involvement can make a difference for today's school children. While industry cannot reach the 40.8 million children now enrolled in K-12 schools, we can reach many of their parents. Given the magnitude of the K-12 crisis, employers cannot afford to ignore the influence we have on working parents.

AEA invites AEA members and all of America's employers to *Get Together for Kids*. America's youth--America's future--depends on it.

AEA welcomes other associations, industries, and federal agencies to join us in the Get Together for Kids Parent-Teacher Conference Campaign. To find out how you can get involved call Pat Hubbard or Cheryl Fields Tyler, (408)987-4200.

American Electronics Association • 5201 Great America Parkway, P.O. Box 54990, Santa Clara, CA 95056-4998

Appendix III

Charlotte
CHAMBER

PROPOSED MISSION STATEMENT AND POLICY
FOR CHARLOTTE AREA BUSINESS
ON BEHALF OF EDUCATION

We recognize that education in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is an important determinant in our future quality of life and our business. We commit our unique business and employee expertise, perspectives and abilities to improve education in this area.

Consistent with commitment, our employees:

- Will be allowed reasonable work time to meet with their children's teachers, to confer and support their children's education.
- Parents should develop regular communication with their children's teachers through open houses, telephone contact, or letter. Support and encouragement should be highlighted.
- Are encouraged to seek leadership and participation in PTA's or other parent-school and goal setting support groups.
- May wish to volunteer to make classroom presentations or serve as a curriculum resource persons using their unique education and experience.
- Should be their children's role models in the home, positive about the benefits of education, assist with homework when appropriate, and structure home time for school work.
- May offer their unique personal skills to tutor or counsel their youth or others in neighborhood.
- May find it appropriate to represent our company's career opportunities, educational preparation for jobs, work ethic needed, and our company's contributions to jobs and the economy.

The above education-business-parent partnership policy ideas are intended to be suggestive to needs and opportunities, unique for each company and school. Some companies may wish to ask a parent-employee committee to discuss a program which will meet the needs of the parents employed.

Parents are frequently a resourceful group. Quality education is everybody's business. We can begin by stressing this to our own employees. Encourage them to take an increased interest in their children and their success at school. And the company can help provide the opportunity.

OTHER RELATED IDEAS FOR COMPANIES TO CONSIDER:

- A "United Way" kind of orientation meeting for employees. Announce and provide ways in which the company will be supportive of K-12 education. Explain your business and the community's new level of support for education.

- Provide during work, noon or after hours workshops for employees on "parenting and working with your youth's school." Use your own trainers or use Chamber volunteer trainers. At a minimum, provide to employees print materials which the Chamber can provide about parenting their children and developing school relations as parents.

- Consider providing flex-time to all parent-employees, exempt and non-exempt, and hourly for meeting time with their children's teachers and counselors. Being "family friendly" is part of the new human resource role we can have as companies.

- Consider donating reasonable company time for employees volunteering to work with schools. Employees might "apply" to use that time, being "approved" by their supervisor for special school related projects.

- Company recognition of volunteers in schools is essential for motivation and growth of a program. Recognition letters from schools and company management, a volunteers' luncheon, executive awards to volunteers, certificates of recognition, nominations for employee awards by peers and community agencies, are some of the "pay" which keeps volunteers feeling good about their help to the company, schools and young people.

- For any parent and volunteer company program to succeed and grow, experience shows there are two key elements:

  1. The CEO, or executive board, or manager of the company location, must believe in the program, support it with sincere words and model with visible actions. A mission statement is the basis of these actions.

  2. The company needs an enthusiastic supervisor or employee responsible for day-to-day leadership, to give direction and carry out a company's program.

Your company can be a model to other companies by supporting education in some of the above ways. We need some member companies who are willing to experiment and model their programs for others -- companies who are serious about improving education with their company actions as well as words. Let us know how you are doing...

• • • • THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER Wednesday, August 7, 1991 11A

VIEWPOINT

Want better schools? Build a partnership

■ Education in Charlotte must change. Murphy's the man, but he needs our help.

By FRANK H. DUNN Jr.
Special to The Observer

Supt. John Murphy is here — and he came into town riding a big white horse, judging from the reaction of shopkeepers, folks at the schoolhouse, and even the people down at the newspaper.

Dunn

I'm betting some changes will be made in how we educate our children in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Let's hope so.

Think about this: The United States spends more money per capita on education than any other industrialized country in the world, yet American children rank dead last on international math tests. Closer to home, North Carolina's average SAT score ranks us 49th out of 50 states.

If our education system were incorporated, we'd sell our stock, replace the board of directors, fire the senior managers, and never again buy any of their product. And, to some extent, that's happening with our school system.

There has been change. But the test scores suggest there hasn't been enough change.

I've been part of ceremonies recently that honored such students as Sherry Winn of Independence High School and Jeremy McMurray of West Mecklenburg High, the winning student-athletes of First Union's Phil Hughston memorial award. And I've gotten to know some wonderful educators. I'm convinced that the raw material for an excellent school system is there.

But something's missing. When I talk to the personnel folks at First Union, they say that just five years ago one in three applicants was qualified for a job at our bank. Today one in *seven* is qualified.

Studies show that in the 1990s the *average* job will require 13.5 years of schooling. That's sobering when you consider that today only seven of every 10 American students graduate from high school.

Who will fill those jobs? Or will we resign ourselves to a work force that just can't produce good toasters or Patriot missiles 10 years from now?

Time for intervention

You and I don't need to be experts at studying trend lines to understand that something bad is happening and that without major intervention it will get worse.

Intervention by whom? Parents, students, educators and anyone else with an interest in smarter workers, better products, a stronger defense, safer streets, perhaps even lower taxes over time.

Here's the good news: The guy who can jump-start a lot of this intervention has arrived. By all accounts, he's tough, he's demanding, he's got the instincts and the background, and he's got a formula that works.

Here are some things I hope he will do:

■ **Insist on acknowledgment.** Like alcohol rehabilitation, education reform won't begin until our community agrees that there's a problem and vows to solve it.

■ **Create heroic expectations.** Just having higher SAT scores than Mississippi by the year 2000 won't get it.

■ **Demand change, even radical change.** The old way only got us to number 49.

■ **Hold educators accountable.** There is something irrational about a value system that says we should not provide job security to a bank teller who has made a $1,000 mistake but should protect a school principal who has created a terrible learning environment for 1,000 students.

■ **Persuade us to invest more resources in our schools.** He can do that if he'll provide an appropriate return on our money.

To succeed, Murphy will need help from outside the school system.

Ernest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, recalls that in the old days, education was a *partnership*, involving preachers, craftsmen, older brothers and sisters and, most of all, parents. Over the years the partnership has eroded, and schools have had to take up the slack.

Business wants to help

If we want better schools, we must rebuild those partnerships. Our company has committed to do its part. In the past year, we have:

■ Created a high-level Education Steering Committee whose purpose is to make our company, and its employees, a more powerful education partner.

■ Surveyed employees to determine how they were involved with our schools and how they would like to help going forward. We gave employees time off from work to visit children and educators during school hours.

■ Held parenting seminars, typically at lunch time, on topics like "Parents are teachers, too."

■ Expanded programs that recognize outstanding educators.

■ Formed partnerships between banking units and schools. At last count, close to 400 First Union parents *and* nonparents were volunteering in Charlotte schools as tutors, mentors and other helpers. They often concentrate on students who don't have good support at home.

Other businesses are doing similar things. Business leaders are eager to do more to help improve public schools because they know their livelihoods depend on a better-prepared work force.

But businesses won't be satisfied to be silent partners. We're frustrated, too. So we'll be loud partners, demanding partners, relentless partners — for a long time.

How important is all this? My guess is that the character of this community will forever be defined by the quality of the education partnerships we forge between now and the end of this century.

Go to it, John. And let us know how we can help.

□□□

Frank H. Dunn Jr. is president of First Union National Bank of North Carolina.

Want to know more?

To learn more about First Union's Corporate Commitment to Excellence in Education, contact Judy Allison, First Union's community relations director, at 374-6990.

For more information about forming a partnership with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, call Mary Boyce, the school system's community partnership supervisor, at 379-7306.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix V

First Union National Bank: 1992 Policy Statement

EDUCATION COMMITMENT
(Time-Away Policy)

First Union recognizes the importance of excellence in education and commits corporate resources and employee talents to improving pre-school, elementary and secondary education in the communities we serve.

We will encourage and foster involvement by our employees who are parents in their children's development and education.

We will encourage all employees to volunteer in the schools and to be advocates for positive change in the educational system.

Managers and supervisors play an integral part in ensuring that our employees are aware of First Union's commitment and have their managers' support. Therefore, we strongly encourage managers and supervisors to be flexible and creative when reviewing individual requests for time away from work. **As a general guideline four hours of paid time may be made available on a monthly basis for activities involving parental participation or employee volunteer activities in schools.** This time away will not be charged against the Corporation's Incidental Absence policy (refer to employee handbook).

The guidelines listed below were developed to assist managers and supervisors as they review employee requests for time off for parental or volunteer involvement in schools.

<u>Guidelines</u>

- Encourage employee to request parental/volunteer time away as far in advance as possible to enable managers/supervisors to make arrangements within the work unit for coverage.

- Employee time cards (if applicable) and attendance cards should be documented to accurately reflect usage of the monthly provision (see attachment).

- Volunteer activities may include (but are not necessarily limited to):

  -Tutoring
  -Lunch pals
  -Library aide
  -Mentoring (for example, Cities in Schools)
  -Coaching
  -Judging
  -Speaking to groups/classes
  -Chaperoning field trips
  -Serving on advisory committees
  -Junior Achievement teaching assignments

- Parental activities may include (but are not necessarily limited to):

  -Parent-teacher conferences
  -Field trips
  -Luncheon programs
  -PTA events

- With prior manager/supervisor approval, employees may utilize their lunch hours in addition to the recommended guidelines.

- The hourly provision for time away is not cumulative; however, managers are encouraged to be flexible in allowing employees time off to be involved in education.

- Absences caused by child sickness, early school closings, accidents are viewed as extenuating circumstances or as emergencies, and should be handled in accordance with corporate policy for absences.

- For time-off requests, managers should consider each employee request individually, taking into account his/her length of service, performance, attendance and department workloads.

- If the parent/volunteer time away provision does not meet an employee's needs, additional time away may be requested using the incidental absence policy. This time away should still be coordinated with and approved by the manager/supervisor.

- Should you need assistance, please contact the Employee Relations representative for your State or subsidiary.

Appendix VI

Memo to Managers from First Union President Georgius

Interoffice Memorandum

FIRST UNION

Date:
June 24, 1992

From:
John Georgius

To:
First Union manager

Re:
Education Time-Away Policy

During the past two school years, First Union employees have spent thousands of hours becoming personally involved in classrooms as parents and volunteers. Throughout our company, I've seen example after example of employees taking to heart First Union's commitment to improve education in the communities we serve. Together we are making a difference in the lives of our young people -- and that makes me proud to be part of First Union.

At the same time, we're asking our employees to work harder than ever before to meet the tough goals we've set for our business units. Meeting both our community and business commitments has required managers to strike a delicate balance. I've been impressed with the way you have managed this balance -- and the way employees have supported each other at work so everyone has an opportunity to participate in our schools.

As more employees get involved as parents or volunteers, we anticipate managers may have a greater need for some general guidance about how to maintain this balance between our business needs and our commitment to education. I asked our Education Steering Committee to develop time-away-from-work guidelines that are both fair and flexible. Those guidelines are attached.

I strongly encourage managers to continue to be flexible and creative when reviewing individual requests for time away from work for parental or volunteer involvement in schools. We're still relying mainly on your good judgment; these guidelines are intended as a supplement to that judgment. And, as always, your Employee Relations representative is ready to help answer any questions.

Thank you again for your commitment to lead both First Union and our communities' schools into the next century as strong and vibrant institutions.

Attachment

Appendix VII

DUKE POWER COMPANY
EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION PROGRAM

Duke Power's Excellence in Education Program provides employees the opportunity to spend up to 10 hours of paid time off per calendar year in academic related activities at local public or private schools. This program complements the existing Power In Education program which Duke Power Company has successfully promoted for several years.

The company is very supportive of educational systems and recognizes that involved citizens are a key to the strength of these systems. Employees working with their supervision must carefully schedule time away from the job so as not to interfere with business needs - and our business needs must take precedence. All employees, not only those with children currently in school, are encouraged to participate in volunteer programs such as mentoring of youngsters without their own parental support. Of course for employees with school age children, the 10 hours may be used for a variety of educational activities such as field trips, parent/teacher conferences, work related to PTAs, etc. The activity must be educational/academic in nature.

Eligibility

All regular full-time employees of Duke Power Company or its subsidiaries and affiliates with the exception of The Peninsula Realty, Inc. and The Peninsula Club are eligible after completion of at least three months of employment.

This program is not currently available to employees represented by IBEW, ATU, OR UTU.

Administrative Processing

A new unproductive time code has been developed to track hours away from work for educational purposes under this program. A maximum of 10 hours per calendar year may be entered under time code - EE. This time will not be reported against employee's availability statistics. Exempt employees and their supervision are charged with the responsibility of allocating and tracking the 10 hours per calendar year, in the same manner vacation is monitored currently.

Additional Information

The Work and Family Brochure update will reflect the addition of this important program that enhances employees' flexibility to be more involved in the educational community as a parent and/or concerned citizen.

* Note: This program does not replace PIE or Junior Achievement activities.

Appendix VIII

NationsBank Corporation
EDUCATION INITIATIVE

NationsBank recognizes that education is a critical factor in ensuring a bright future for our children and our communities, for our business, and for our nation. The company pledges to use its talents and resources to help improve the educational system.

Consistent with this pledge, NationsBank encourages its employees:

- to attend parent-teacher conferences, during paid working hours if necessary;

- to volunteer in schools as tutors, discussion leaders, coaches, mentors, administrative assistants, leaders of PTA or other support groups, or in other ways (for full-time employees with satisfactory performance, paid time of up to two hours per week may be provided during working hours, subject to supervisory approval and scheduling);

- to support school programs through financial contributions (the company has a Matching Gift program for qualified contributors).

In addition, NationsBank has pledged $2 million to the Southern Regional Education Board (a legislative consortium of 15 states, from Maryland to Florida to Texas) to support the Board's goal of raising regional student performance results to the level of national averages.

NationsBank also will support school-business partnerships, consistent with local community needs and local NationsBank office determinations, with a focus on the improvement of student performance results.

Through its contributions program, NationsBank provides substantial support to colleges and universities throughout its market area.

This statement is intended as a guide to local NationsBank offices in developing appropriate responses to local needs. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION may be obtained from the senior banking officer in any NationsBank location or from:

Corporate Communications;
NationsBank Corporation
Charlotte, NC 28255

Appendix IX

Goals and Objectives of Project PIECES

GOALS:

1. By providing an opportunity for greater interaction between school personnel and employed parents, employers will demonstrate their recognition of the importance of the family and education in our community.

2. By increasing parental involvement in the educational process of school-aged children, we hope to see a reduction in child-abuse, the drop-out rate, adolescent pregnancy, substance abuse and other acting out behavior of youth in our county.

OBJECTIVES

For the community

1. To provide an innovative approach of cooperation between industry and schools.

For industry

1. To enhance the image of the industry in the community.

2. To increase productivity by reducing parent stress.

3. To reduce absentism by eliminating the need for release time due to parent conferences.

For the parent

1. To help establish rapport between the parents and school.

2. To provide parents with the opportunity to meet with school representatives in a more convenient setting.

3. To give parents support, information, and encouragement in the difficult job of parenting.

4. To improve parent-child communication skills.

For the schools

1. To provide school officials a contact with parents whose work schedule prohibits attendance at conferences and meetings.

2. To present school officials as non-threatening helpers who are concerned about the welfare of their students.

3. To provide school officials with opportunities to observe the working situations of their students' parents in order to understand more clearly conditions which affect student attitudes, behaviors, and goals.

RATIONALE

1. Studies have shown that the performance of students whose parents are involved with their child's education is higher than those whose parents are not.

2. Many parents find it difficult or impossible to attend conferences and meetings with school personnel due to lost pay from their work place.

3. Some parents, due to their own experiences with educational institutions, feel intimidated by schools and their surroundings.

4. Children's self-esteem is improved by greater parental involvement, including: good communication, responsible discipline, and shared values.

5. Industries lose time and money due to low employee productivity resulting from family problems, children's school problems and the like.

Therefore, the Newton-Conover City Schools in conjunction with the Catawba County Council on Adolesfents propose the following strategies to bridge home, school, and the work place.

STRATEGIES

1. Once a month a representative from each of the city schools in the Newton-Conover School system will visit your company.

2. Through pre-arranged appointments, parent employees will be able to have 15-minute conferences with the school representative who will be prepared to discuss the child's progress in class, achievement and IQ scores, and unique behaviors of concern to the parent and the school.

3. From these contacts, the possibility of small group counselling in parenting skills may develop which will in turn enhance the self-esteem of parents and students alike.

*It should be noted that these industry visits are not intended to take the place of parental visits to schools. The Newton-Conover City Schools always encourage parents to visit our schools to discuss the progress of their children and to meet their child's teachers.

Appendix X

Article from Ridgeview, Inc. Company Newsletter

RIDGEVIEW NEWS & VIEWS
Volume XIII, Number 1

CONFERENCING
AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR PARENTS

Parents and teachers working together make an unbeatable team. Through conferences, the players on the team consult and can make decisions which are most beneficial to the student player. Here are some ways to make a conference successful.

Think about what you want to learn from the conference. Be prepared with questions. How is my child doing in class? Does my child turn in homework? Are there assignments missing? How does my child get along with others? What can I do to help my child?

Talk with your child to learn his/her concerns. Discuss likes and dislikes, problems and successes.

Ask if you do not understand something. Often, without intending, teachers use unfamiliar terms or initials. If you do not know the terms, ask for clarification.

Talk and listen. Tell the teacher what may be happening at home which may affect the child's school work. Talk about your child's interests. If you have concerns, express them. Listen carefully to what the teacher is saying.

Stay in touch with the teacher. If you think of something you did not ask, write it down to ask at another time. Have a good conference.

Appendix XI

Point #5 of "20 Point Plan for Reshaping K-12 Education in North Carolina"

Point #5

Enlist employers in North Carolina to establish a policy that permits parents up to eight hours of school involvement leave per year to participate in efforts to improve student achievement.

Rationale:

Parental involvement and support are key needs in the education of children. Research shows that the involvement of parents in the school can greatly improve the level of student achievement. Unfortunately, there is a built in conflict for most parents in our society due to the fact that their hours of employment often conflict with normal school hours. Over the years, schools have attempted to accommodate working parents by scheduling activities during non-work hours. However, there are some activities that only take place during the school day in which parents should be encouraged to participate.

Strategies:

The Superintendent will direct Department of Public Instruction staff to work with employers in North Carolina in order to convince them that it is appropriate for their employees to have eight hours of school involvement leave per year to work in planned programs in schools. The goal for the 1990-91 school year is to have at least fifty employers involved in this program.

Impact:

Increased parental involvement will result in increased student achievement. In addition, this program will provide a model for other employers in North Carolina to adopt. The concept will also aid in building understanding and support for our schools.

Estimated cost:

No new funds needed.

Appendix XII

1991 North Carolina Law Regarding Time-Off for Parent-Teacher Conference

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
1991 SESSION
RATIFIED BILL

CHAPTER 706
HOUSE BILL 494

AN ACT TO ENCOURAGE THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO FACILITATE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts,

Section 1. G.S. 115C-47 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:
"(34) To encourage the business community to facilitate student achievement — Local boards of education, in consultation with local business leaders, shall develop voluntary guidelines relating to after-school employment. The guidelines may include an agreement to limit the number of hours a student may work or to tie the number of hours a student may work to his academic performance, school attendance, and economic need. The General Assembly finds that local boards of education do not currently have information regarding how many of their students are employed after school and how many hours they work; the General Assembly urges local boards of education to compile this critical information so that the State can determine to what extent these students' work affects their school performance.

Local boards of education shall work with local business leaders to encourage employers to provide parents or guardians with time to attend conferences with their children's teachers.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide guidance and technical assistance to the local boards of education on carrying out the provisions of this subdivision."

Sec. 2 Local boards of education shall report their actions taken to implement this subdivision to the State Board of Education before April 1, 1992, and the State Board of Education shall report the actions taken statewide to implement this subdivision to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee before May 1, 1992.

Appendix XIII

ENERGIZE EDUCATION

Company Parental Agreement

We recognize that education in the Catawba County, Newton-Conover City, and Hickory Public Schools is an important determinant in our future quality of life and our business. We commit our unique business and employee expertise, perspectives, and abilities to improve education in this area. We commit to this goal established by the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce to increase parental awareness, involvement and support of education.

To do our part, _____ agrees to do the following in support of education in our county:

1. Be receptive of parents'need to consult with teachers and guidance counselors.
2. Allow employees to receive messages from the school system during work hours and respond to these messages in a timely manner.
3. Allow time and space for parental workshops during working and non-working hours to educate workers on the need for parental involvement.
4. Promote parental involvement in education through publishing articles in company newsletters and other media sources.
5. Develop an on-going program to promote educational opportunities for employees.
6. Consider establishing the State's "Eight Hours School Involvement Leave" or other programs to provide employees time off to participate in school activities.
7. Promote the importance of pre-school education to parents within the work force.
8. Support the efforts of the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce and the County School Systems in the effort to improve education in Catawba County.
9. Circulate a Parental Agreement form for all employees to sign voluntarily agreeing to become involved in improving educational awareness with their children.

I _____ of _____, hereby
(Individual) (Business Name)
commit to the support of education and use the influence of this Company to emphasize the importance of education to the children of Catawba County and assist in their education by participation in this program.

Signed_____ Date _____

Appendix XIV

ENERGIZE EDUCATION

PARENTAL AGREEMENT

_____and the **Catawba County Chamber of Commerce**, in cooperation with the area school systems, have developed this parental agreement for your consideration. The purpose of this agreement is to involve YOU, the employees of _____with education in the Unifour area. As parents and adults, we must emphasize the importance of education to our children, grandchildren and all young people with whom we have contact.

Listed below are the four items that we believe are most significant to develop an understanding of the importance of education to our young people. We ask that you read these items and consider signing this agreement and making a commitment to the future of our children. Please remember that education will lead our children to the jobs of the future and that **their future begins now**. Also, please remember that even if you do not have children in school, your energy will make a difference in education if you become involved.

1. **Emphasize the importance of school**

Emphasize the importance of school and attending school everyday. Convey to children that school is for their future and they must attend every day possible and be in their classrooms on time.

2. **Provide time for school work**

Provide time and space for schoolwork at home. Ensure that children complete their homework as required.

3. **Communication with the teacher**

Make every effort to attend counseling sessions with your children's teachers. Maintain contact with teacher during school year to resolve any problems and keep abreast of your child's development.

4. **Discuss school with children**

Discuss school with children on a daily basis. Show your children that you are interested in their education.

I, _____, having read the above, will make a commitment to education and using my energies to emphasize the importance of education to children and to assist in their education.

Signature _____Date_____

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